

# Transport for Canberra

## Time to Talk Transport

### Outcomes Report

PREPARED FOR  
ACT Government Environment and Sustainable Development

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*“The Draft Transport for Canberra policy provides a solid framework for achieving a cleaner, more sustainable city for the Canberra community ..... Canberra has for many years been planned around the car – and we are paying for this with increasing rates of physical inactivity, obesity and chronic disease.”*

Heart Foundation, Nov 2011, Time to Talk Transport

# 1 The Context

## 1.1 Time to Talk - Transport for Canberra

**In 2010 the ACT Government undertook a broad and deep community consultation with the Canberra community, Time to Talk Canberra 2030. This captured the values of the Canberra community who identified the things they love about their “Bush Capital” city and the need for a sustainable future.**

In surveys and in face to face consultation the community indicated an awareness that as Canberra changes and as its population grows it needs to be a more sustainable city, offering a rich and diverse lifestyle.

An important message was the call for everyone to be able to participate in community life, for all people to have access to work and to services that add to their quality of life and for Canberra to maintain its sense of place as a “Bush Capital” with green, open spaces and clean fresh air. People asked for greater choice and affordability of housing and recognise the need to lower Canberra’s high per capita carbon emissions and contain city sprawl. They recognise that more people living and working in Town Centres and living and working along transport corridors could support public transport and enable a more lively and sustainable lifestyle.

The Canberra community indicated an understanding of the need to reduce carbon emissions and limit the use of cars and called for improved access to public transport to enable this and for integrated planning and transport strategies for Canberra.

In response to this the ACT Government has made it a priority to plan for an effective and efficient transport system that meets the needs of the community, while reducing its environmental and social impacts. The Draft Transport for Canberra Plan has been developed as a transport framework to work as an integrated document with the Draft ACT Planning Strategy. Both were developed following many forums, discussions and other consultation processes with the Canberra community and key stakeholders.

The draft plan was launched on 4 October 2011 and has been made widely available to the Canberra community who have been invited to comment on the plan. The Transport for Canberra plan has 32 draft action items and Canberrans have been invited to comment on any part of the document. Of particular interest to Government in the engagement process were the key questions of:

1. How would you change the Frequent Network Plan proposed in Transport for Canberra?
2. What land use and road network changes do people think would best support a frequent service?
3. What do people think would help everyone get the best possible access to public transport?
4. How can we encourage people to walk and cycle for transport?
5. How can we best manage roads? And manage travel demand as Canberra grows and changes?

## 2 Executive Summary

*“Transport for a sustainable city is heading in the right direction in building a frequent public transport framework.”*

Online Comment on Transport for Canberra, Nov 2011, Time to Talk Transport

### 2.1 Broad Support from Community and Peak Bodies

**The strongest message from the consultation is one of broad support for Transport for Canberra while urging the Government to “be ambitious” and deliver the improvements to the transport system in the shortest possible timeframe. The Canberra community is ready to embrace a public transport system that will enable them to be less reliant on cars, providing access for all. The benefits of active transport such as walking and cycling, combined with public transport, are acknowledge with the proviso that the system needs to enable people to get around safely and efficiently across Canberra and the Region.**

This report summarises views expressed about Transport in Canberra during the public exhibition period of October and November 2011. A total of 61 written submissions were received from individuals and from organisations representing thousands of Canberrans. Each submission has been examined individually to understand the issues being raised. The issues raised in each submission will be considered prior to the finalisation of the plan.

The Canberra community and organisations that have participated in the community consultation have welcomed the development of a new transport policy focussed on more public transport and more active transport, such as walking and cycling.

However, the community willingness to move to more people using public transport and efforts to reduce driving by limiting the availability of parking spaces recognises that while many people can adapt to alternative forms of transport, the alternatives for people with a disability and many of the aging people in the community are more limited. The call is to provide better services for the more vulnerable in the community.

The submission from Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA) states: *“Transport is an essential resource for creating and maintaining positive health in populations.” “HACC commends the focus on Active travel ...but would recommend an acknowledgement and consideration in planning and target setting of those consumers who, due to significant mobility issues are unable to make use of active transport options.”*

A very wide range of views has been expressed during consultation. Most people welcome a new policy approach and offer support for the draft plan. Against this base of broad support for change, many have responded by suggesting particular changes to routes for further investigation or disagreement with particular policies. The focus of these suggestions is generally to provide improved connections across Canberra, reduced waiting times and trip times. Behind the comments is a willingness to use public transport rather than cars if it services people's transport needs effectively, efficiently and affordably.

Mostly the call is for Government to be ambitious and implement change sooner than the long-term timeframe proposed in the plan; and for improvements to be delivered more urgently and with more focus on access to the vulnerable in the community. There is a perceived need to maintain or

increase the current absolute numbers of disabled parking spaces and for a review of parking provision for people with a disability to ensure Canberra meets national standards.

The vulnerable includes people with chronic and mental illness, children, the aging, people of non English speaking background, the homeless and unemployed and some members of the Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander community, who are highly reliant on public transport services and the community bus service.

There is a call for ongoing consultation about transport and setting up a Transport Community Consultation Forum for exchanging information and ideas.

The HCCA submission notes that women have particular needs and notes that one of the systematic barriers to women meeting their health needs is difficulties with transport.

It is recognised the Draft Plan is intent on making positive improvements to the existing transport system. People with local knowledge of the routes, the travel patterns and age of their community members have suggested localised improvement that might improve ease of access for people using public transport. Most comments focus on suggestions about the routes proposed for the frequent transport network and the feeder transport framework that connects to this or on increased access to the community bus. Generally comments from community members have a local public transport and bus route, focus, rather than examining and commenting on all four of the strategies in Transport for Canberra. This was the pattern of comments received in all public forums and in focus groups and written submissions from people in the local community.

The following is a typical example of an individual comment offering support for the strategy with a specific concern raised:

*"I did take heart when looking at Transport for Canberra draft plan suggesting that a frequent local service would go through Bruce by travelling along Thynne / Paget / Braybrooke by 2021. The problem is that 2021 is a long way away and I'm pretty sure Bruce could support an Xpresso- style service along the route well before 2021"*  
(Written submission, Canberra resident)

The online discussion has been a more high level conversation about trends in transport in other Australian cities and overseas with a focus on rail and light rail. For example, one person stated:

*"One reason I think that trains and trams capture people's imagination is that shows a city is serious about Public transport."*

Written submissions from peak bodies and other organisations representing many thousands of Canberrans such as the Heart Foundation, the Council for the Aging, the Health Care Consumers Association, the Property Council, the Planning Institute of Australia, the ACT Greens, the Ministerial Council for the Aging, the Taxi Industry and others, focus on a wider range of issues that relate to their special interest.

The Planning Institute of Australia's submission provides support for *"providing a more comprehensive and more integrated policy for the Territory."* but raises concerns about potential blocks to delivering the strategy without changes to *"a number of contradictory Government policies."* In particular the submission raises the lease variation that *"Negates (government's) infill policy and increases the cost of private and public transport to service green field areas."*

The Shopping Centre Council of Australia questioned the establishment of the Offset Parking Fund, proposed in Transport for Canberra, and makes a strong call for *"further consultation and clarification on the need of the fund, ahead of other funding mechanisms, as well as its objectives, design, application and impact on new retail development ."*

The Ministerial Council for the Aging supports the road transport objectives in particular the creating of a safer transport system, the strategic management of parking demand and the reduction of emissions from road transport. It states: *"The use of electric motor scooters by seniors should be included in the anticipated future use of other electric vehicles together with a need for infrastructure support including plug – in points and battery switching stations."*

The HCCA submissions calls for the provision of more community buses and a review of the taxi industry to better meet the needs of people with a disability.

The ACT Human Rights Commission submission calls for *" a formal and explicit commitment to consider the interests and experiences of children, young people , older people, people with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people in both the action list and the reporting framework for Transport of Canberra."*

The ACT Greens are critical of a lack of *"detail and concrete commitments in the Plan"* but concludes:

*"The ACT Greens acknowledge that there are many positive aspects to the Plan. It seeks to improve Canberra's Transport system in important ways, and we congratulate the Government on the efforts it is making. The Plan recognises a number of important transport principles which the ACT Greens agree with."*

The Property Council of Australia welcomes Transport for Canberra and supports the ACT Government's objective of providing an effective and efficient transport system that meets the needs of the community while reducing its environmental and social impacts and calls on the Government to prioritise initiatives rather than seeking balance. It suggests market forces determine parking charges and says *"scrap the proposed Offset Parking System."* While it supports the notion of access for all to public transport, it questions the \$6.50 per passenger subsidy and suggests subsidising those in need not all travellers. It calls for reform of the taxi service.

Full transcripts of all submission are included in the Appendix to this report.

The main areas of criticism of Transport for Canberra that are repeated in many submissions include:

- Linking the achievement of good public transport with higher density development.
- Establishing the Parking Offset Fund
- Adjusting the details of bus routes and location of bus stops to ensure wide access to services.
- The long timeframes for delivering the plan.

Doubt is expressed about the strategy of encouraging higher density development along particular corridors and in town and group centres to enable greater numbers of people to use public transport making extended services viable. These comments look back to times in the 1970's when there was greater per cent-age of the population using public transport, at a time when Canberra's population was lower.

*"Transport for Canberra ignores the decline, fails to ask what has caused it and proposes a continuation of the same policies that caused the decline in the first place." "... the indicative network for 2031 looks quite sparse and unambitious. It would seem possible to complete the proposals within 5 years or so."*(Written submission, Canberra resident)

*"We are pleased to see that on the whole Transport for Canberra Draft Policy addresses [changing living expectations] much more comprehensively than previous plans. However we believe there are some gaps."*(Written submission, PIA)



## 2.2 Concerns raised by Canberra's Community Councils

**Canberra's Community Councils, including representatives from North Canberra, Gungahlin, Tuggeranong, South Canberra, Inner South Canberra, Weston Creek, Yarralumla and Belconnen were given a briefing and provided written submissions.**

Major concerns raised by the Community Councils included:

- The need for real time bus information for locals and to help tourists.
- The targets being not ambitious enough.
- Lack of a clear pricing strategy for public transport.
- Need for more work on cost benefit analysis between light rail and buses.
- Need for cost benefit to consider the public good and the social benefit of public transport.
- Clarification about integrating heavy rail into the system.
- Need for more discussion with the Commonwealth and NSW Government with a view to a faster train service between Sydney and Melbourne.(need not be Very Fast Train)
- Need to work more closely with other local government authorities about commuter traffic from Queanbeyan/Jerrabomberra, Bungendore and Googong.
- Calls for the creation of urban form to encourage active transport.
- Support for park and ride concept.
- Need for more discussion on parking strategy for a more holistic parking policy to support park and rise but also local shopping and services parking needs.

## 2.3 Changes called for by the community

**There is strong support for the Rapid Service from Guangalin to Civic and many people commented on the need for a civic circle free shuttle bus service to assist people to move around civic and across to the Parliamentary triangle. Smaller buses are suggested to allow "nightrider" services to negotiate winding and steep suburban streets. An expansion of the community bus service is called for by many individuals and different organisations.**

There is recognition of the success of the community bus trial and a call to make the service available to more vulnerable people in the community and for greater subsidy for the service. The expansion of this service is called for to meet the needs of those who struggle to access public transport for a variety of reasons.

*"Provide community buses to social services location in places, like Holder High School, where buses don't go – more community buses would help." [Notes left as comments at the Exhibition]*

The most frequent criticism of Transport for Canberra is that it is not seeking to achieve wider access to public transport across Canberra, with better connections across the city in a short enough timeframe. There is a good level of community recognition that transport strategies have the potential to improve community health and wellbeing and to improve access, equity and participation in community life. The benefit of making Canberra a more sustainable city, as people choose

alternatives to the car, is recognised and was commented on by many who attended engagement forums and gave feedback and in formal written submissions from peak organisations.

The need for a public transport system that provides equity and access for people of all ages and backgrounds is generally understood and supported. A study to ensure that bus stops are an easy walking distance for older members of the community is suggested by the Council for the Aging.

It is also proposed that a separate study be undertaken for transport for people with a disability and that improvements be made to information so that people with limited English skills can access public transport. Broad based overarching principles are called for in relation to welfare and social inclusion with the ACT Human Rights Act, as a guiding principle for this.

Many commented on the need for better information about existing and future bus services for everyone and highlighted the special needs of the vulnerable in the community.

*"Children and young people are particularly affected by strategies that emphasise car dependency".*

*"Social inclusion needs to include multicultural background of community as well, and people with non-English speaking background."*

*"The transport disadvantage for people with disabilities needs a separate study. It is not sufficient that it is only mentioned in the Action Plan for Disabilities, it needs to be actively articulated in the Transport for Canberra. The bottlenecks of access for people with disabilities are not sufficiently discussed in the document."*

*(Above quotes from Transport for Canberra, Focus Group, participants Oct 2011)*

*"Older people are increasingly wishing to age in their own home and community. This may involve downsizing but gives the advantage of a familiar environment and the support of friends and community services. This means older people will continue to live in all areas of Canberra. The transport plan must take this into account." (COTA submission)*

## 2.4 Support for greater investment in transport

**Generally there is an acceptance of the need for change to more sustainable transport patterns and usage in Canberra. People are urging the Government to invest in public transport and accelerate the transport plan.**

Many people called for Action bus timetables to be the same on weekends as week days, to make the service easier to use and more readily available. People considered that this would increase use of public transport.

People who visited the exhibition commented on the need for the detail of new bus routes to be reviewed to ensure they can enable everyone to reach social services, shops, schools, hospitals as well as workplaces. Canberra's role as the national capital and as a major regional centre is recognised and a bus service designed to take local people and visitors to key major destinations for sport, tourism and recreation was repeatedly proposed, including a free shuttle bus circle loop of civic like, Adelaide's bee line and Perth blue and red cat services.

While a number of comments were received in support of light rail as an ideal rapid transport system for Canberra, the overall message from individual community members is that a rapid transport network is needed and buses could serve the purpose, as long as they are well designed, wheelchair accessible and frequent. Several Community Councils and peak bodies called for cost benefit analysis of different models of transport. People seemed more concerned about receiving improved services than about service modes. An improved public transport system is seen as a way of enabling older people in Canberra to remain active in community and family life and in the work force for longer.

Smaller shuttle busses were suggested as an additional mode that might be run to fuller capacity across Canberra and in hard to reach areas that are steep and are unable to be reached by Action buses.

## 2.5 A service that connects better across the region

**Cross border and regional services are supported.** There is recognition that many older people from Queanbeyan and other NSW regions commute to Canberra on a regular basis, not only for shopping, courses, events and entertainment but also for services including health services. The concept of the ACT Government working with regional councils to discuss and develop transport connections is welcomed and was raised by a number of groups including the Queanbeyan Council submission.

## 2.6 Support for safe walking and cycling

**Generally there is strong support for any improvements in the urban planning and transport strategy that will enable safer walking and cycling in Canberra.** The key issue in relation to walking and cycling is the interface between cars and cyclists and walkers and the need for design and public education that minimises risk of accident. The Canberra Pedestrian Forum supports the strategic goals of the plan but calls for more research into travel patterns of Canberrans, as well as proposing tolls to finance future road construction as a more equitable, user pays approach. Submissions from older suburbs such as Deakin commented on the poor condition of old infrastructure for walking and cycling and in newer subdivisions people comment on the lack of walking paths and lighting. HCCA suggested the introduction of safe cycling regulations for use on shared pathways with pedestrians.

## 2.7 Community Suggestions – in Brief

The focus of community comments and suggested changes were on:

- Real time public transport information
- Changes to timetables
- Bus route changes
- Frequency of services
- A Forum for ongoing community consultation on transport
- A frequent and rapid service on Northbourne Ave
- Safety of walking and cycling
- Investigate light rail
- Improved public links to Canberra Airport
- Improved train links to Sydney and Melbourne
- Expansion of the community bus service
- A free civic bus loop
- More small shuttle services, especially to hard to reach places
- A key destination bus service for visitors

- Improved customer service
- Better disability and wheelchair access
- More disability parking
- Noise reduction on Canberra Buses
- Gradual upgrade of Action buses to well branded more sustainable fleet

## 3 What we did: Opportunities for Engagement

As part of a Government commitment to engage with the ACT Community on important policy change the government has used the Time to Talk Website as a vehicle for online consultation and to make the Transport for Canberra document readily available.

The ACT Government has actively invited engagement on the new policy documents. The two related policy documents, the Draft Transport for Canberra and the Draft ACT Planning Strategy have been developed to work together to create a more sustainable future for Canberra.

The exhibition was advertised and media discussion promoted the exhibition. As well as online consultation, a touring exhibition held at the ACT Assembly and other locations, in conjunction with the ACT Government's draft Planning Strategy, provided members of the public with the opportunity to meet a planner to discuss the strategy.

The exhibition has been made available across Canberra:

- Gungahlin Library - Wednesday 2 November to Monday 14 November 2011
- Belconnen Library - Monday 14 November to Monday 21 November 2011
- Tuggeranong Library - Monday 21 November to Monday 5 December 2011
- Woden Library - Monday 5 December to Monday 12 December 2011
- Legislative Assembly - Monday 12 December to Sunday 18 December 2011

Following the receipt of all submissions on 11 Nov 2011 independent analysis of submissions and comments provided by organisations and individuals has enabled the writing of this community consultation Outcomes Report. A small number of individuals commented on line and at the drop in meet the planner sessions. The majority of submissions were written submission from individuals and organisations; although some visited the exhibition at the ACT Assembly and completed feedback forms and later sent submissions.

Many of these individual visitors were members of Community Councils or were representing their local issues on behalf of large groups of several hundred neighbours. Several visitors to the exhibition claimed their comments expressed the views of communities of 1200 or more people who had particular public transport needs.

The feedback form at the exhibition and online invited Canberrans to answer a series of broad questions about both the Transport for Canberra Strategy and draft ACT Planning Strategy, recognising that most people were interested in both strategies and how they would work together to lead to change in Canberra. While these questions invited comment many added their own comments on a range of local transport and planning issues. Below are the questions and a snapshot of common themes and answers.

During the consultation period a survey was undertaken of young people in Canberra schools and a focus groups was held for a group of year 8 /9 students at Clare College.

### 3.1 The Feedback Form questions

1. How well does the draft Transport for Canberra and draft ACT Planning Strategy fit with your vision of a liveable Canberra and the city you want for the future?

2. How well do you think the draft Transport for Canberra and draft ACT Planning Strategy address the challenges facing Canberra and why?
3. Is there anything you feel is missing from the draft ACT Planning Strategy?
4. Is there anything you feel is missing from the draft Transport for Canberra?
5. Do you have any general comments about or suggestions for these documents?

### 3.2 The Online Questions

Below are the questions used for the online consultation and a selection of typical comments.

#### ***What can be done to help everyone get the best possible access to public transport?***

*A: "Provide buses that run quickly, regularly and connect well with other buses. This would help ensure that more passengers have access to buses. Taking a bus from Downer to Garran takes over an hour which would take a maximum of 30 minutes by car. For those who can drive the better option is to drive for those who cannot or do not drive, this means excessive wait times in such a small city. "*

*A: "Those who don't live in inner suburbs find it really hard to use buses because the routes takes too long, don't run regularly or do not connect well with other buses. Canberra can do much better when it comes to public transport"*

*A: "It would be great to have dedicated bus lanes on the Monaro Highway from the Johnson /Tharwa Drive Junction all the way to Fishwyk / Kingston."*

#### ***What are the most important things to consider in Transport for Canberra to manage existing and future parking demand?***

*A: "Commuting for work-Primary issue is to have one pick up place only, relying on park and ride, to deliver to offices. The argument is always "I can get to work by car quicker". Until that is resolved, stay in the dark ages."*

*A: "Don't have everyone work in civic spread the offices to other areas. Have a light rail system for Canberra"*

*A: Stop charging so much for parking or become like every other city in the world and have buses that go to and from the airport from main centers such as Belconnen, Tuggers and the city."*

#### ***How do you see light rail, electric cars and other transport technologies shaping transport in Canberra?***

*A: "The trick is to take the plunge to invest in the infrastructure and then keep the investment up so it remains adequate even as the population changes."*

*A: "We should definitely have a rail system of some sort to and from major Town Centres with buses delivering passengers to the suburbs. Suggested rail lines would be:Belconnen or Gunghahlin –city – Woden"*

*A "Hybrid train and bus rapid system is an excellent idea"*

### 3.3 Briefings and Focus Groups

As part of the community consultation a number of peak organisations and Canberra Community Councils have been briefed on Transport for Canberra at community meetings and Focus Groups.

Representatives of groups from across Canberra attended Focus Groups or called in to view the exhibition of Transport for Canberra at the ACT Assembly. Groups who provided comments are listed below. Copies of full submissions are provided in the Appendix to this report.

### *Community Councils*

- Tuggeranong Community Council
- Inner South Canberra Community Council
- Queanbeyan City Council
- North Canberra Community Council
- Woden Valley Community Council
- Deakin Residents Association.
- Woden Community Service
- Griffith/ Narrabundah Community Association Inc
- Weston Creek Community Council

### *Canberra Institutions*

- University of Canberra
- Conservation Council of ACT
- Regional Development ACT
- Canberra Urban and Regional Futures /ANU
- The Australian Labour Party
- The ACT Greens
- Ministerial Council for Women
- Office of the Multicultural Affairs ACT
- ACT Human Rights Commission

### *Health Advocates*

- Heart Foundation ACT
- People with Disabilities
- Epilepsy Association
- Health Care Consumers Association
- National Disability Services

### *Peak Bodies*

- Council for the Aging
- Chartered Institute of Transport
- Canberra Pedestrian Focus
- ACT Chamber of Commerce
- Shopping Centre Council of Australia
- Property Council of Australia
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Planning Institute of Australia

### *Indigenous groups*

- Yurauna Centre Canberra Institute of Technology
- OMATSIA
- Aboriginal and Torres straits IslanderTSIS

## 4 Summary of comments on Transport for Canberra Strategies

### 4.1 Strategy 1 Improving Access to Public Transport

Comments were received in relation to the question:

***“What can be done to help everyone to have the best possible access to public transport?”***

The comments showed an awareness that there is a need for change and improvement to Canberra’s public transport system to meet the needs of residents of all its areas, particularly new areas on the fringe for the city. Answers to this question generally brought broad support for strategies and the improvements to the bus system as proposed in the plan. Many included suggested route changes and for reviews of existing services including taxis, community buses and disability transport services. The need for better public information, public education and awareness raising of the benefits of using public transport was called for in many submissions. There is recognition of a need to change public attitudes to using public transport.

Submissions representing the commercial managers of large centres and the Property Council of Australia expressed concern that the release of corridor land for more intensive development on transport corridors might dissipate demand for land and development within centres that may already have the potential to accommodate more intensive commercial and residential development.

The Property Council submission observes: *“The Government’s reliance on revenue from land sales both negates its infill policy and increases the cost of private and public transport servicing green field areas.”*

It directly questions the general public transport subsidy provided and calls for a review of the Taxi Industry. It comments: *“Canberra has a regrettably bad reputation with both ACT residents and interstate users of taxis because of the monopoly grip of the owners of taxis and radio network results in a poor, high cost service.”*

In other comments innovative suggestions included a ferry service from Civic to Kingston and a service between Civic and the Zoo with a stop near the Governor General’s residence and the National Museum to cater for local and tourist needs.

A youth consultation welcomed more buses but questioned who would fund the increase in public transport. Another young group questioned who would fund the cost of the increase of public transport. The youngest person to provide a submission was a 10 year old calling for light rail because *“it’s good for the environment”* and *“I think this would make Canberra a better place.”*

Many indicated an interest in light rail for Canberra but recognised that cost benefit investigations would be required and that this could be a high cost option for Canberra.

Key community recommendations in relation to public transport included:

- Community support for the idea of public transport corridors and for more bus stops along high frequency routes and the general shift to a better mix of transport options including all forms of transport.
- Support for improving cross regional connections to the community of Queanbeyan and other regional residents who commute frequently to Canberra.



- Commuters from Queanbeyan need to reach not only Civic but also Tuggeranong, South Canberra and Majura.
- Suggestions for a Forum for ongoing transport consultation.
- ACT Government to commit to lobbying NSW and the Federal Government for increased rail services to Sydney and Melbourne and within Canberra.
- Suggestions were made for an increase in frequency of outer suburban services, along with affordable parking at outer interchanges to increase patronage.
- A call for community education to increase public transport usage and suggested that the bus services need to be repositioned in the public mind as an appealing and appropriate way of travel rather than something for “losers”.
- Improved weekend services and awareness raising focus should be placed on getting people to use buses on weekends for leisure activities and not just as a Monday to Friday commuter service.
- Recognition that greater use by everyone, whether or not they drive, at weekends could make the service more viable for everyone.
- One participant suggested government workers be encouraged to model the use of public transport.
- The Taxi industry feels that the plan for new housing development on transport corridors will have a beneficial effect on the ability for taxis to deliver a more efficient and sustainable service to Canberra.
- The notion of more highly populated group and town centres, connected by relatively highly populated corridors, will facilitate the spread of taxis that will be better able to connect with waiting passengers.
- Amendment of the Transport Plan to make explicit reference to the Centres Hierarchy so that development is still focused on Centres.
- The Queanbeyan City Council called for Action 7 to be expanded to include bus connections to the Hume Industrial area, the existing suburb of Jerrabomberra and the planned suburbs of Googong, Tralee and Environa.

### *The voice of the Community*

*“Live and play’ in your own town centre. This shouldn’t limit people to go beyond own district and across the city. Make sure planning considers linkages across city as well.’ (Online comment)*

*“Biggest hurdle is to get from one side of the city to the other – currently you just can’t unless you got a car.”(Focus Group comment)*

*“Without adequate feeder routes, the frequent network will not attract sufficient patrons to economically support high service levels, especially outside peak period.”(Focus Group comment)*

*“In Hall we have no choice we have to drive ourselves everywhere, we have no choice.”(On line comment)*

*“I strongly support ACT government moves to reduce car travel and increase bus , however, bus travel needs to be made easier and faster. Buses will need to become more frequent, especially in connecting suburban routes.’(Online comment)*

*“The ACT Government needs to think clearly about taxi’s, recognizing them as highly –polluting private transport and to think of policies which would reduce their use , in favour of more environmentally friendly and safer forms of transport.”*

## 4.2

### Strategy 2 Managing Parking Demand

A number of innovative solutions were proposed for managing parking demand. They broadly conform to the ideas in the ACT Planning Strategy and Transport for Canberra. Most support the Strategic Parking Framework, especially the commitment that parking plans are to be delivered for city and town centres every three years from 2012.

Online discussion about parking included a focus on public transport options, including light rail, which would get people out of cars. Comments recognised that by distributing workplaces across Canberra fewer parking spots would be required in Civic. People also commented that parking needs could be minimised by improving the bus services across Canberra to the main centres and from the airport.

There were a number of comments about peoples' preferences for driving and parking because of the time it currently takes to use buses. However, underlying this expressed preference was the sense that public transport could be an option if it was not "*time wasting*".

A number of submissions commented on parking from the perspective of park and ride facilities with support for the concept. Commercial enterprises such as the Tuggeranong Hyperdome supported the approach of getting the relationship between public transport planning and parking correct. They commented that "*Tuggeranong has an ample supply of parking available to commuters and that park and ride facilities established elsewhere would discourage the use of existing facilities at Tuggeranong Town Centre.*"

The Planning Institute of Australia suggested encouraging a more flexible use of existing commercial parking spaces, such as the ability to commercially utilise underused spaces within existing buildings and a change in the pricing regime of open air parking to encourage more commercial users. It proposes a market driven approach, which would increase the cost of car parking and encourage public transport use, rather than the Offset Fund approach in Transport for Canberra. The Shopping Centre Council of Australia called for further consultation on the idea of the Offset Fund. This view is supported by the Property Council submission, which goes further and calls for the Offset Fund proposal to be scrapped.

The Property Council of Australia called for the Parking Offset Fund to be scrapped. The Council for the Aging and older Canberrans generally commented on the need to keep parking accessible and affordable particularly at local and group centres where people go for local services.

Key community recommendations in relation to parking include:

- A review of disability parking has been called for to ensure that Canberra meets national standards in this.
- The introduction of residential parking scheme.
- Review and further consultation on the proposed Offset Parking Fund.
- Review and development of a more holistic parking strategy to meet commuter and local parking needs.
- People from inners suburbs such as the Deakin suggested giving priority to "mitigation measures to limit commuter traffic through quiet residential streets, and to extend adequate and appropriate short and long term parking and free parking for residents."
- The ACT Ministerial Council on Aging suggested improved safety, infrastructure and education about the use of electric scooters. "*The growing use of electric scooters by seniors requires planning attention to rules infrastructure support and education, as an important social inclusion issue*".
- An active engagement campaign was suggested to encourage the Canberra community to use public transport. This indicated an understanding that people should make the shift from cars and traffic congestion. "*What would it take to get you on the buses?*"

- A call for light rail was proposed as a *“real option”* for public transport.
- Investigating opportunities around residential on- street parking permit stickers was suggested. The introduction of such stickers would see greater value placed on public parking spaces and regulate the number of parking spaces available in built up areas.
- Some comments were received from people who want more parking but this was a minority view.
- If development is going to take place then it will be necessary for Government to allocate parking in suburbs.
- Others supported of parking to enable park and ride strategies
- Maintaining parking for people with a disability was a frequent comment.

### *The voice of the Community*

*“A problem, not acknowledged in the document is meter feeding. Limited time zone parking areas which should be available for short term visitors are crowded out by those who feed meters for all day parking.”(Written submission)*

*“Stop approving development that does not include parking.” (Online comment)*

*“Stop charging so much for parking.”(Online comment)*

*“Allow motorbikes and scooters to park on the footpaths in the city and all town centres.”  
Written submission)*

*“Income from parking fees can, with more benefits, be generated by a well-planned public transport system that integrates needs of Canberrans.” (Written submission)*

*“Group centres are used for grocery shopping and community interaction and unlike Town Centres and other workplaces catching public transport there is not an option.” (Written Submission Gungahlin Narrabundah Community Council)*

### 4.3 Strategy 3 Light Rail, Electric Cars and New Transport Technologies

While comments included support for rail and light rail the overall focus was support and suggestions to improve access for all to the existing Action bus services in Canberra.

Those who commented on light rail strongly favoured light rail and there were calls for cost benefit analysis between light rail and buses.

Generally people observed and welcomed that Transport for Canberra looked at several modes of transport and was introducing the concept of Active Transport as a mode of transport. *"It's refreshing to see a document that covers all modes of Transport."*

Many observed that the Government needs to plan the infrastructure now for future growth. Overall comments still favoured a mix of options so that even if light rail were introduced as a fast people moving method, the bus system would support it and efficiently *"join up"* the system. Again there was emphasis on improved connections and services at weekends to encourage greater use. Many people commented that light rail would be an ideal solution but were aware that the high cost might make it unachievable for Canberra's current population base.

There was mention of electric vehicles emerging as new green transport that should be accommodated in the future with *"plug in points"*. Planning for electric bikes was also suggested. As the Action bus fleet expands replacement vehicles should be *"greener technology"* and quieter. With an aging population the safety, control and use of electric scooters is flagged as a growing issue for Government.

The most commonly suggested addition to Canberra's transport modes was a *"smaller, more efficient shuttle bus that could be used for lower usage routes, rather than full size or midi buses."*

Support for the Planning Strategy and for use of cycling and motor scooter as alternative transport modes is implied in this comment from the Canberra Pedestrian Forum: *"barely two thirds of respondents to Canberra's Walk21 survey agreed that they had a local shop within comfortable walking distance where they could buy fresh vegetables. Reducing travel distances will also increase the potential for switching to low- emission travel modes such as cycling and motor cycling."*

Other key points from the community included the suggestions that peak oil should be mentioned in the strategy given that the Transport Strategy was in part an adaptation strategy for mitigating peak oil risk. Innovations suggested included MLAs should lead by example and have electric cars and that subsidies should be provided for electric cars and Electric Vehicle charging points provided as a government initiative.

Many specific links for light rail were suggested including a link to and from the airport to Civic. A resident wrote *"Canberra has the car culture of a 1970's country town; stricter rules on the modifications of cars should be introduced."*

Key community recommendations in relation to new transport technologies included:

- More focus on light rail
- Improved heavy rail connections between Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne
- Planning for increased use of electric people movers and plug in parking facilities in new universally designed apartment developments
- Planning for "plug in" points for electric vehicles.
- Changing the bus fleet progressively to more sustainable vehicles
- Adding more smaller bus shuttle services
- Providing for electric bicycles service

## *The Voice of the Community*

*"May be worth taking the light rail out to Kingston -Manuka which would also link it to the railway".(Written submission)*

*"Young men see their cars not as a convenient mode of transport, but as a projection of their ego... enforce stricter rules on modification." ( Written submission)*

*"Canberra can do much better when it comes to public transport' "Build more houses in the middle of Canberra so people don't have to make long journeys".( Online comment)*

*"Try getting a couple of kids and a pram onto the bus, the Melbourne Trams system is far more civilized".( Online comment)*

*"A hybrid train and bus rapid system is a great idea.'(Online comment)*

*" The ACT Government should provide Electric Vehicle charging points and subsidise the cost of electric vehicles."(Online comment)*

*"Maybe a compromise might be something like Adelaide's Obahn System which runs along its own track and on roads."(Online comment)*

#### 4.4

#### Strategy 4 Freight and managing the road system

People expressed strongest views about public transport when asked to think strategically about the road system. Comments focused on the positives of the road system. Some observed driving is quicker than buses and cars less polluting than buses. There was also recognition that the road had the potential to support a system was also good for walking and cycling and this needed to be encouraged.

There were no specific comments about freight movements in the online comment.

The written submissions from peak organisations provided more comments on the road system than most individual comments.

For example the Taxi Industry submission noted that the Taxi Industry sees itself as complimentary to local bus services. *"The joint aim of public transport should be to see the demise of the second car. In a city where there is a responsive and reliable public transport system, economics will persuade some people to do away with a second car."*

The Conservation Council submission on Transport for Canberra calls for no further major road building or road widening on the basis that road congestion will encourage drivers to use public transport. They also call for scoping and potential implementation of a preliminary light rail system linking major interchanges, for example Gungahlin – Dickson- City-Hospital-Parliamentary Triangle-Woden - Tuggeranong.

In the online commentary there was a strong expressed preference for light rail. Typically participants in the online blog style chat are younger, educated and mobile - even well-travelled to other cities in Australia or elsewhere. There comments were generally looking long term and calling for Canberra to be a leader in public transport innovation as it has been as a planned city.

*"Light rail!!! Give us a real option. I'd swap my car for a commute, but never for action buses."*  
*"The trick is to take the plunge and invest in infrastructure and then keep the investment up so it remains adequate even as the population changes."*

Some commented on Government *"trying to push people onto buses."* The view was if the Government want people to use public transport the people commenting on line favour light rail.

Others made comments like *"light rail is a must having returned from the UK and seeing their public transport system and how it works and the movement of people by trains and buses which run every few minutes."*

Some submissions called for a better train service from Sydney to Canberra, as well as for improved Country Link connections that don't involve bus links and better rail direct connection to Melbourne. However in all focus group sessions there was very strong support for expansion of the bus system as a primary part of the Canberra Transport system that services the needs of many in the community. There were no specific comments about freight movements in the online comment.

Several written submissions addressed freight and the road system and supported the approach to giving priority to ring roads to divert traffic away from densely settled inner areas. The environmental value of smooth traffic flows, by use of ring routes, was generally well understood and supported.

Most comments on the roads strategy were local in nature and identified problem spots where traffic incidents could or do occur.

Comments like these are typical:

*"In reference to the Monaro Highway, it has several dangerous intersections, similarly the Barton Highway between Gungahlin Drive and Hall needs upgrading."*

*"We have a vested interest in the Cotter Road interchange proposal but any of these bus stops would be within a 10 – 15 minute walk and would be very desirable."*

Ideas from the community on managing the road system included:

- Shuttle buses around the city and across the lake to the Parliamentary Triangle.
- More subsidized taxi vouchers for vulnerable people
- Small shuttle buses to allow night rider services to navigate Canberra's winding and steep suburban streets where Action services can't reach people now.
- Ensure public transport services offer access to health and other service centres
- Ensuring that changes to the road system don't interfere with horse riding trails on the edge of Canberra
- The suggestion that where horse crossings are needed the UK style Pegasus crossings are introduced.

### *The Voice of the Community*

*"You need to make ticket prices very cheap and the routes will be well used."(Written submission)*

*"Strategies address growth and urban sprawl – however the Active Transport System does not address that is impractical to cover large distances to work by bicycle by most people."(Written submission)*

*"Introduce a dedicated under/above ground rapid transport system such as happens in Lille (France) with no driver and a continuous service."(Written submission)*

*"Real time information - in Europe, at major transport hubs, indicators show the time which will elapse until the bus to your destination is due. This is a tremendous help, you have confidence to know it is coming and when it will arrive."( Online comment)*

## 4.5

### Strategy 5 Encouraging Active Travel – walking and cycling

Walking and cycling as a way of transport is well understood and has significant support amongst those who commented. However, although it is recognised as a healthy option, it is also recognised that many who are more vulnerable in the community cannot chose this way to get around Canberra.

The online discussion about active travel implied support for the idea of walking and cycling as a means of transport. At the feedback 'Meet the Planner' sessions more focus on the comments about active travel was on specific examples or anecdotal observations about the obstacles to walking and cycling in Canberra. These included the extreme weather – hot summers and cold winters, the lack of separated cycle ways, and the distances for most people from home to work being too great.

Comments online included: *"Canberra is perfect in autumn and spring but lethal in winter" or "encourage better facilities at work so people can shower and change".*

While not specifically stated these comments imply support from some to the changes proposed in the Transport for Canberra and the Draft Planning Strategy which would see more people living and working near town and group centres, enabling people to walk to services and places they need to go more easily. A repeated message was:- *"spread the work areas" ... " have more people work closer to home".*

The comments implied support for the ideal of making active travel a more popular way to get around Canberra, subject to making it safe and easy to do so. Conflict between cycling and walking on paths was mentioned frequently. The call for separated cycle ways on major roads was another frequent comment at the drop in sessions. At its most extreme there were comments like *"ban bicycles from the road".*

Many individual comments were left by people online or at the drop in sessions about specific streets and routes in areas of Canberra that were not serviced with level, well lit, footpaths. People observed that the effect of this is to discourage walking and cycling due to lower safety, particularly for the more vulnerable people in the community, including children and the aged. Many people observed it was unsafe for people to have to walk along side major roads not on footpaths. It was also observed that this was most common in new development areas where development had proceeded for communities of as many as 1000 people without adequate services including well lit footpaths, bus services and open space being provided.

Amongst written submission from organisations, the Heart Foundation commented strongly in support of active transport as important to community and public health and wellbeing.

The Heart Foundation supported the reduced emphasis on car- dependency in the draft Transport for Canberra policy as a welcome step towards changing development practices which currently to give priority to car use over walking, cycling and public transport.

The HCCA comments the focus on active transport. But recommends; *"an acknowledgement and consideration in all planning and target setting of those consumers who, due to significant mobility issues , are unable to make use of active transport options."*

Groups like See- change – communities creating a sustainable Canberra and ACT peak Oil Incorporated support walking and cycling along with the broad goals of the ACT Planning Strategy. These groups are seeking to influence people to act in more sustainable ways.

ACT Peak Oil Incorporated strongly supports the draft transport policy but calls on all of the policy proposals to be more ambitious with stronger commitments to action and to make reference to peak oil. In relation to cycling it called on the Government to invest in cycling infrastructure with consideration for both electric and conventional bikes and to implement the Australian National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016.



Ideas from the community on Active transport included:

- Improvements to pathways
- Community education on safety of using shared zones for walking and cycling
- Bike parking and bike exchanges to be provide along bike pathways.
- Provisions for charging electric bikes
- Support for park and ride concepts from the Community Councils
- Recognition that walking and public transport can work together as long as the distances to bus stops are easily walkable
- Encouraging children to walk and ride safely to school has support
- Recognition that active transport is good for community health and wellbeing

### *The Voice of the Community*

*"The policy should be to provide a level walking path for each person."(Focus Group comment)*

*"By promoting active travel the policy supports equity outcomes."(Online comment)*

*"I want the grandchildren to be confident relying on bikes and Public transport instead of cars and want services capable of serving them."(Focus Group comment)*

*"In the context of planning for Canberra's Transport future, and Integrating work travel with leisure walking, cycling and horse riding in open space and bushland we wish to safe connectivity between open spaces." (Written submission)*

*"Strasbourg (France) offers pushbike transport in the back compartment of the tram. This does not only decrease traffic on roads, it also allows a far greater radius for pushbike users, making it a highly attractive combination."(Written Submission)*

*"Combining tram and bus – transport of pushbikes with a well organized pushbike rental is a future oriented sustainable solution for tourists, occasional pushbike users and others. Paris runs this successfully and Canberra intrinsically much more prepared for such a system."(Online comment)*

## 5 Key ideas for Transport from the Focus Groups

The 20 ideas below were provided by focus group participants following presentations on the draft Planning Strategy and Transport for Canberra Strategy held in the ACT Assembly to a series of Focus Groups with representatives who represent the interests of thousands of Canberrans.

The participants who contributed to suggesting the ideas were from the following organisations:

- Council for the Aging
- People with Disabilities
- Health Care Consumers Association
- Ministerial Council for Women
- Ministerial Health Council ACT
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- National Disability Services
- Canberra Pedestrian Focus
- Woden Community Services

### 5.1 20 ideas from the community

- **Idea:** Review the old master plans as part of new master planning so that community needs in established areas are not lost
- **Idea:** Add a principle about people and social inclusiveness to the final transport and planning strategies based on ACT Human Rights Act.
- **Idea:** Undertake a cost benefit analysis on most appropriate mode of public transport
- **Idea:** Allow longer consultation periods and establish an ongoing transport forum for consultation.
- **Idea:** Expand the community bus service and expand it to meet the needs of people who are vulnerable and with disabilities.
- **Idea:** More access and subsidies for community bus service
- **Idea:** More taxi vouchers and more buses with wheelchair facilities.
- **Idea:** Improved public transport information for people with a disability and 'nesb' groups.
- **Idea:** Review disability parking provision to meet national standards.
- **Idea:** Transport policy to recognise the role of people movers in an aging population.
- **Idea:** Improve safety in bus interchange areas.
- **Idea:** Improve regional public transport connections and options across Canberra
- **Idea:** Improve the safety and lighting of walking paths for, cyclists, walkers and people in wheelchairs or with a disability and mothers with pushers.
- **Idea:** Introduce shuttle services – Civic loop, key destinations and to the Parliamentary Triangle.
- **Idea:** Improve airport connection by public transport.
- **Idea:** Give real time transport information

- **Idea:** Establish a location and program for bike exchange.
- **Idea:** Introduce residential parking scheme.

**Issue: Walking and Cycling**

*"Walking and cycling don't have proper solutions in the plan. The document gives no information to people with disabilities on how to access walking, cycling and bus."*

**Issue: Community bus services:**

*"The village Creek facilities (aged care services) are an example how busses do not work."*

*"People with wheelchairs are on a three week waiting list for services."*

*"Inadequacies of current services, don't meet the demand."*

*"Community bus services need to better respond to people's health."*

*"They are not set up for disabled people's needs."*

**Issue: Parking**

*"The current document is very controversial on parking. There must be no overall decrease in parking, if it means a decrease in disability parking."*

*"If there is an overall decrease in parking, ensure that disability parking is overall increasing. Problem: overweight people often use disability parking."*

**Issue: Buses versus cars**

*"Transport for Canberra document is contradictory. Note that the car is important for some vulnerable people, there needs to be an increase in parking provision that has wider widths."*

*"Empty busses cost us a lot. Using smaller cars is important, but focus is only on key routes for busses."*

*"Most busses are not accessible for disabled people and wheelchairs, some people wait for 3 hours until they can access a bus with their wheelchair."*

**Issue: Transport and access disadvantage**

*"The transport disadvantage for people with disabilities needs a separate study."*

*"It is not sufficient that it is only mentioned in the Action Plan for Disabilities, it needs to be actively articulated in the Transport for Canberra document as well. The bottlenecks of access for people with disabilities are not sufficiently discussed in the document."*

*"Taxi vouchers don't cover sufficiently the transport costs and it is expensive!"*

*"More busses with wheelchair access more frequently."*

*"Good information when a bus service is available is needed, in particular for people with disabilities. Note that there is still a huge amount of people who for one reason other the other don't use computer or internet."*

*"Fundamental principle of ACCESS and EQUITY is not applied to transport services. What are targets that improve access and equity in both strategies? Focus further discussion on it."*

*"Targets need to be better tied back to strategies, too simple framework in Planning Strategy."*

**Issue: Social inclusion**

*"Social inclusion needs to include multicultural background of community as well, such as for people with non-English speaking background."*

*"There is no real emphasis in strategies and background papers for people with low English language skills who are not specifically mentioned."*

*"Plans need to be more explicit about equity and accessibility (see also under affordability)."*

*"Broad based, overarching principles should be improved regarding welfare and inclusion based on the ACT Human Rights Act."*

**Issue: Short Period of consultation on the Transport plan.**

*"An extension of the deadline for public comments is needed because of documents that aren't accessible for blind people."*

**Issue: Live and play' in your own town centre**

*"This shouldn't limit people to go beyond own district and across the city. Make sure planning considers linkages across city as well."*

*"Biggest hurdle is to get from one side of the city to the other – currently you just can't unless you got a car."*

**Issue: Review of the Taxi services:**

*"Review of existing taxi services is needed. Submission will recommend improving accessibility and integration with disability bus services."*

*"Taxi vouchers for people with special needs should be increase. The ACT is very ungenerous compared to other states."*

**Issue: Women and need for improved community safety**

*"Isolated pathways are unsafe, in particular for older and disabled."*

*"An audit of older women showed that areas they feel particularly unsafe in are bus interchange areas."*

*"Women often don't feel safe walking to or taking a taxi at night."*

*"Aspects of safety for women is sometimes also an issue for more vulnerable men."*

*"Community SAFETY is a key issue, such as unsafe suburbs, lack of street lighting at night, bad design."*

**Issue: Frequent bus network**

*"Frequent network is fine, but feeder services are equally important."*