

2009

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE SIXTH ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
REPORT 29 OF 2007**

ACTION BUSES AND THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLAN

TABLING STATEMENT

**Presented by
Mr Jon Stanhope MLA
Minister for Transport**

15/10/2009

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to table the ACT Government's Response to the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment's Report on Inquiry into ACTION Buses and the Sustainable Transport Plan.

I acknowledge that there has been a delay in responding to this Report, however many of the recommendations have already been implemented.

The ACT Government is committed to providing sustainable transport for Canberrans and has a proven track record. The ACT Government has demonstrated its commitment to sustainable transport since commencing Office and has introduced a number of initiatives to encourage greater use of public transport in the ACT.

Of the Committee's 47 recommendations the Government agrees to 29, agrees in principle to eight, agree in part to one, notes seven and does not agree to two.

Of the two recommendations not agreed, one relates to the introduction of family fares on ACTION buses. ACTION will be introducing a new smartcard ticketing system in 2010. The use of a family ticket will not identify the number of passengers boarding and alighting a bus or the origin and destination of the journeys. Patronage statistics is a key performance indicator for ACTION in its reports to the Government and Assembly. This information is also vital for services planning.

The second recommendation which is not agreed relates to amending the Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT) to require public bodies to promote access, equity and equality. It is not necessary to legislate to ensure ACT Government agencies promote access, equity and equality. These outcomes can be achieved through a range of administrative mechanisms.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to outline a number of initiatives the ACT Government has introduced that addresses issues raised in the Report.

In 2007, the Government provided funding of \$2.3m over the following four years for **ACT Seniors and Community Transport**. All holders of an **ACT Seniors Card** are now able to use concession fares on ACTION buses during peak periods. Previously non- Aged Pension ACT Seniors were not eligible for concession travel in the peak periods.

The funding also allowed for the introduction of a **community on-demand, wheelchair accessible mini-bus service** to supplement public transport. This initiative benefits older Canberrans and others isolated by a lack of transport options – such as people with a disability, new migrants, and people who may be temporarily unable to move easily in their community. Six mini-buses provide on-demand bus services. The on-demand services are administered by regional community services.

In 2008, free bus travel was introduced for any Canberran 75 years of age or older, by using an **ACTION Gold Card**. The ACT Government provided \$500,000 over four years towards this initiative. The Gold Card is linked to the existing older drivers' awareness program where it is recommended that drivers over the age of 75 years consider their driving circumstances. The Gold Card initiative encourages our Seniors to take the bus instead of driving their car.

The Gold Card has been a fantastic success, with approximately 1200 users per day. This initiative potentially reduces social isolation for our older Canberrans. I have heard that some Gold Card Users take a bus ride, now at no cost, as their 'outing' for the day.

The ACT Government continues to improve our public transport system which is paramount to reducing transport emissions and preparing for a low carbon future.

The Government has provided \$1.0 million in 2009-10 for ACTION to introduce a new service, **REDEX** – Rapid Express Direct, to be trialled in 2009-10. The concept of rapid transit services, such as the REDEX, will compliment the Government's long term transport plan.

Free travel for cyclists was introduced in December 2007 to encourage the use of the bike racks. This initiative was also part of the Government's Climate Change Strategy. However, now that cyclists are used to using the bike racks, ACTION does not believe any incentive, such as free travel, is necessary. In July 2009 free travel for cyclists was removed, although it should be noted that there is no charge to carry a bike on the bike rack.

ACTION has recently introduced a new policy for **fold-up bikes**. Fold up bikes that are designed to be carried on public transport can be carried on ACTION buses. Normal fares apply for passengers who bring a fold up bike onto the bus. Bikes must be secured in the folded position prior to boarding the bus and stored in the luggage rack

The Government is re-designing our **bus interchanges** to provide a better waiting and boarding experience for ACTION's customers by integrating interchanges with other public spaces such as shopping centres.

As part of the **Belconnen Town Centre redevelopment**, the Belconnen bus interchange has now been demolished. New bus stations have been installed at 3 locations. All bus routes through Belconnen Town Centre now service the three bus stations for customers.

The new ACTION smartcard system will utilise the latest ticketing technology, with equipment supplied by Parkeon (formally Wayfarer), the provider of the current ticket system. The new system represents a significant advancement in ticketing technology which will provide many benefits to passengers and ACTION.

These benefits include:

- passengers will be able to conveniently recharge their Smartcards by direct debit, BPay, over the internet or by phone to keep their value topped up;
- passengers will receive a discount on their fares when they use these “top up” methods;
- passengers will pay the lowest fare of the day with free travel for frequent users of the service based on monthly fare caps;
- quicker boarding times making boarding easier and the bus service more timely and efficient;
- significantly improved patronage data, including details of where passengers get on and off the bus and the number of passengers on a bus at any time;
- using this data, planning of bus routes and time tables will be enhanced, allowing ACTION to better deliver services at times and places where they are most needed; and
- reports on adherence to bus time tables.

The new ticketing system is scheduled to be implemented in the second half of next year.

There are many tasks to be completed before the system can be introduced. These include the design of the system to accommodate Canberra’s fare arrangements, the supply and distribution of smartcards, the appointment of agents to provide “load value” services, driver training, and the supply and installation of equipment across the ACTION fleet, in the call centre and in the “back office”.

Bus users will be required to tag-on and tag-off buses, which will significantly improve ACTION’s capacity to monitor passenger trends and make adjustments to meet changes in demand. There will be a customer education program to inform the community about the benefits and operation of the new system. Trials will be conducted before the system “goes live”. The new smart card system is an important part of the ACT Government’s investment in developing a more efficient and user-friendly bus service.

Mr Speaker, a number of the recommendations made by the Committee, emphasise the need to advance the goals set out in the *Sustainable Transport Plan* and seek assurance that the government is committed to doing so.

I take this opportunity to restate the government's commitment to the targets we set for ourselves in the Sustainable Transport Plan to help us increase the percentage of people using sustainable transport – like public transport and walking and cycling - in the future.

Our **sustainable transport goal** articulated in the Sustainable Transport Plan is to increase the percentage of people walking, cycling and public transport to work from 13 percent in 2001, to 20 percent in 2011, and to 30 percent in 2026.

This requires 16 percent of work trips by public transport, 7 percent by cycling and a 7 percent by walking in 2026. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates we are well on the way to achieving these targets, but there is still a long way to go.

In July this year, the Government brought together over 100 representatives of community and business groups at a **Transport Roundtable**, chaired by ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Dr Maxine Cooper. This was a very successful event which sought ideas and input on the transport issues for Canberra and the region that are of most concern for the future.

At the Roundtable, I announced that the Government is developing the **Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016**. The Sustainable Transport Action Plan will be a detailed document setting out how the Government will implement the Sustainable Transport Plan in the short to medium term - from 2010 - 2016. The input from the Roundtable will be reflected in the Sustainable Transport Action Plan as it is developed over the coming months.

The Sustainable Transport Action Plan will link together four strategies which detail how we move around Canberra and the region. These four aspects of the integrated transport system – parking, public transport, cycling and walking, and transport infrastructure – require detailed planning and strategic policy thinking.

The four strategies will be prepared alongside the overarching Sustainable Transport Action Plan.

These strategies will address a number of the specific recommendations made by the Committee's report.

In particular the **Public Transport Strategy** being developed will address issues raised by the Committed including:

- the opportunities to expand and make better use of park and ride and bike and ride transport options;
- strategic public transport planning which will increase use of public transport; and
- strategic decisions around the frequency and speed of public transport services.

A very substantial amount of work has already been done on a draft Strategic Public Transport Network Plan by transport experts McCormick Rankin Cagney, and there have recently been public consultations on this which will inform the government's decisions about the shape of the ACT Public Transport Strategy.

Other issues raised by the Committee will also be addressed in the development of the Sustainable Transport Action Plan, such as opportunities for Travelsmart programs, which assist the community to understand their sustainable transport options and better utilise them.

In many respects the issues and concerns which have been highlighted in the Committee report reflect work which has been underway for some time, or is now in development, to identify the way forward for the ACT transport system. I am confident that the Sustainable Transport Action Plan will provide that strategic way forward and, in doing so, answer many of the issues the Committee has quite legitimately raised.



Government Response

Standing Committee on Planning and
Environment

Report on Inquiry into ACTION Buses
and the Sustainable Transport Plan

October 2009

15 / 10 / 2009

INTRODUCTION

The Government has supported the Inquiry into ACTION buses and the Sustainable Transport Plan due to a strong commitment to public transport and a desire to provide a bus service that better meets the needs of the community. Our thanks go to the Chair and members of the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment for their report and to the many people who took the time to make a submission and/or appear before the committee.

The Government has introduced a range of initiatives to build a better bus service, including a new more frequent network, improved information and marketing, the replacement of 100 older buses and improvements to public transport infrastructure. These initiatives address many of the recommendations raised in the Committee's report.

A response to each of the Committee's recommendations follows.

RECOMMENDATION 1

1.40 The Committee recommends that as part of the review for Network 08 and future service planning, that relevant ACT Government agencies and the National Capital Authority review inter-town and Xpresso routes in view of the projected completion of the Gungahlin Drive Extension in 2008, and the proposed urban expansion in Molonglo.

Agree.

A comprehensive consultation process was undertaken prior to the design and implementation of Network 08. The Government is currently developing the Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016, which once developed will set the steps that the Government needs to take to meet our Sustainable Transport targets. Consultation is well under way on this plan which will include a plan for public transport, cycling and walking, parking and the infrastructure that will be needed to support transport needs in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 2

1.68 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to seek an Australian Government review of the statutory formula for Fringe Benefits Tax concessions to remove the perverse incentive for increased kilometres of car travel, and/or to seek the extension of tax exemptions or other incentives to public transport users.

Agree.

Fringe Benefit Tax is the responsibility of the Australian Government. The ACT Government will pursue the issue as appropriate opportunities occur.

RECOMMENDATION 3

2.8 The Committee recommends that ACTION develop Network 08 in explicit compliance with human rights principles.

Agree.

As part of planning for Network 08 ACTION conducted a comprehensive survey of passengers and their travel needs. The community, particularly those who do not regularly use the service, were also invited to comment on the factors that would encourage their future use of the service.

RECOMMENDATION 4

2.22 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to support the delivery of TravelSmart or equivalent programs in Canberra.

Agree.

The ACT Government has completed Travelsmart programs for 11,000 households in Belconnen and some 30 schools. The effectiveness of the Travelsmart household program was evaluated by an independent consultant with the results showing a reduction in car travel of 12.7% within the project area. The implementation of such programs, in the future, will be considered having regard to competing priorities and with reference to the Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016 (when finalised).

RECOMMENDATION 5

2.26 The Committee recommends that ACTION, when developing Network 08, review the comments made in submissions to this inquiry about ACTION services in general, and about particular bus routes in Network 06.

Agree.

The comments have been examined and have been addressed as far as possible in designing the new network. Network 08 provided a significant improvement on Network 06 as it attended to poor frequency (resulting in long waits for service and/or connections), inadequate service span (services starting too late or finishing too early) and the pattern of urban development which has placed new requirements on the bus service with regard to travel requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 6

2.31 The Committee recommends that as part of the development of Network 08, that ACTION reviews its bus timetables to ensure that services are not avoidably clustering.

Agree.

New schedules and time tables were introduced for Network 08, with limited clustering of services (where possible).

RECOMMENDATION 7

2.55 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government not support any weakening of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport in the context of the 5-yearly review of the standards.

Agree.

The Government has and continues to express public support for the disability standards. The Government will examine options to improve monitoring of compliance with the disability standards. The Government's fleet replacement strategy which will see 55 per cent of the fleet fully accessible by 2012 is a demonstration of the Government's commitment to the current standards.

RECOMMENDATION 8

2.56 The Committee recommends that ACTION continue to consult closely with disability advocacy groups and individuals, and continue to adapt its services for people with disabilities, consistent with human rights principles.

Agree.

RECOMMENDATION 9

2.57 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to lobby for increased Australian Government funding for public transport improvements, including for more accessible services.

Agree.

The Government notes that the mechanisms for obtaining Australian Government funding are limited. However, where there is an opportunity to seek support for improved public transport from the Australian Government the ACT Government will ensure that opportunity is pursued.

RECOMMENDATION 10

2.76 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examine the role of community transport provided by Regional Community Services under the Home and Community Care Program, with a view to strengthening this program to assist it in providing alternative, affordable and flexible transport options for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Agree.

The Government provided funding in 2007 for the introduction of a community on-demand, wheelchair accessible mini-bus service to supplement public transport. This initiative benefits older Canberrans and others isolated by lack of transport options – such as people with a disability, new migrants, and people who may be temporarily unable to move easily in their community. Six mini-buses provide on-demand bus services. The on-demand services are administered by regional community services.

RECOMMENDATION 11

2.85 The Committee recommends that the review of government concessions be completed, and that favourable consideration be given to extending the permitted use of ACT Seniors Cards for concession travel on ACTION buses, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Agree.

In 2007 the Government introduced an initiative to allow all holders of an ACT Seniors Card to use concession fares on ACTION buses during peak periods. Previously non-aged pension ACT Seniors were not eligible for concession travel in the peak periods.

RECOMMENDATION 12

2.97 The Committee recommends that demand-responsive travel be re-examined for possible future re-introduction to the ACT, once an integrated smart-card ticketing system is in place and functioning effectively, and the Belconnen interchange has been refurbished or replaced.

Agree.

ACTION's new smartcard ticketing system will be introduced in the second half of 2010. Once implemented a demand responsive travel trial will be undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION 13

2.110 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health and the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services include the ACT Walking School Bus

Program within a broad marketing and health promotion campaign linking physical activity with sustainable transport, including ACTION bus services.

Agree.

ACT Health and TAMS have agreed to collaborate to promote active transport in the ACT. The Government has provided 3 year funding to ACT Health for the Walking School Bus program.

RECOMMENDATION 14

2.111 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the Australian Institute of Sport and sporting clubs in the ACT to enlist one or more high profile athletes to assist in promoting physically active sustainable transport options in the ACT.

Agree.

RECOMMENDATION 15

2.112 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assist the YWCA of Canberra to secure adequate and sustainable long-term funding to support the growth and development of the ACT Walking School Bus program.

Agree in principle.

The Government supports the growth and development of the ACT Walking School Bus program. ACT Health has provided funding for its implementation over three years. This program has benefits in several areas, including children's health, sustainable transport, environment and school children's safety. The program has a web link established with ACTION's web site providing information on school bus services and on regular route services.

RECOMMENDATION 16

2.128 The Committee recommends that pay parking be introduced in all major employment areas in the ACT, with restrictions on long stay parking in nearby areas, but with incentives provided for multi-occupant vehicles. Where the Australian Government is responsible for pay parking policy, the Committee recommends that the ACT Government encourage the implementation of a pay parking regime.

Agree.

Pay parking is in place in the City and those town centres which are major employment areas. ACT Government car parks provide short-term parking

closest to retail and commercial areas, where short term parking is needed for customers and clients to have convenient access to these businesses. Long-stay, commuter parking is provided in car parks further away from the retail and commercial activity. The ACT Government will continue to provide incentives for multi-occupant vehicles, such as the 3 for Free scheme, where this is feasible in ACT Government car parks.

While it is, ultimately, a matter for the Commonwealth to determine whether pay parking will be introduced in areas under its control, it will be important for pay parking to be introduced in a coordinated way, so that the impact of the introduction of pay parking can be effectively managed (for example, to avoid displacement and overspill issues). The ACT will continue working with Commonwealth agencies on the introduction of pay parking.

RECOMMENDATION 17

2.136 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services ensure that visitor information placed by ACTION in ACT tourism publications includes both the ACTION phone number and web address.

Agree.

It is normal practice for ACTION's phone number and web address to be displayed in advertising and every effort will be made to ensure both appear in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 18

2.137 The Committee recommends that ACTION ensure that its call centre number is more prominent in future telephone directories for the Canberra–Queanbeyan–Yass region.

Agree.

As part of improving customer information, ACTION's call centre number is more prominent in the telephone directory.

RECOMMENDATION 19

2.141 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services ensure that ACTION bus services for the Causeway area are reviewed, taking account of the views expressed in submissions to this inquiry.

Agree.

Services were reviewed as part of Network 08 and improvements in services to the Causeway implemented.

RECOMMENDATION 20

2.153 The Committee commends the initiative in the ACT Government's Climate Change Action Plan permitting cyclists who use the bike bus racks to travel without charge as this will reduce the likelihood that bus services will be delayed by cyclists using this service, as their fare payment time will be eliminated.

Noted.

Free travel on ACTION buses for cyclists mounting their bike on the rack was provided until June 2009. However, now that cyclists are used to using the bike racks, such an incentive is not necessary.

RECOMMENDATION 21

2.154 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services consider better promoting the Bike 'n Ride service to increase its uptake during off-peak periods.

Agree in principle.

ACTION's Bike 'n Ride service is well patronised. In addition, ACTION has recently introduced a new policy for fold-up bikes. Fold up bikes that are designed to be carried on public transport can be carried on ACTION buses.

RECOMMENDATION 22

3.16 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government re-open the Woden depot for ACTION buses, and examine the viability of the provision of a gas re-fuelling station in north Canberra.

Agree.

From the second half of 2009, the former Woden depot will be re-opened as an operational overflow depot.

There is no operational requirement at this stage to establish a gas refuelling station in north Canberra.

RECOMMENDATION 23

3.17 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that adequate time is provided for driver rest breaks in Network 08.

Agree.

Driver rest breaks meet the current ACTION Agreement. ACTION is currently timing all routes to ensure services are scheduled appropriately.

RECOMMENDATION 24

3.30 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase bus fares for Network 08, but that an appropriate level of concession protection should continue for disadvantaged and low income passengers.

Noted.

ACTION bus fares were increased in July 2009. The Government has agreed to include tertiary and concession fares in its Concessions review.

RECOMMENDATION 25

3.31 The Committee recommends that ACTION consider the introduction of family fares on ACTION buses.

Not agreed.

ACTION will be introducing a new smartcard ticketing system in 2010. The use of a family ticket will not identify the number of passengers boarding and alighting a bus or the origin and destination of the journeys. Patronage statistics is a key performance indicator for ACTION in its reports to the Government and Assembly. This information is also vital for services planning.

RECOMMENDATION 26

4.15 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government's strategic policy documents better engage with and more explicitly address the challenges likely to arise from declining supplies of fossil fuels.

Agree.

The ACT Government's sustainability framework document, *People Place Prosperity: a policy for sustainability in the ACT* states that sustainability for the ACT Government is about "providing for people, protecting our place and creating prosperity – now and in the future." Inherent in this, is the need to recognise those factors which will impact on future prosperity, such as challenges arising from declining supplies of fossil fuel.

Since the release of that document and the 2004 *Sustainable Transport Plan* (STP), there has been a substantially increased world wide focus on the issue of "peak oil" and the implications of declining supplies of fossil fuel. There are many experts around Australia, and worldwide, who are predicting that declining fuel

supplies and rising prices will reduce the level of travel using private vehicles and increase demand for efficient and environmentally sustainable public transport.

The Government is currently developing a "Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016", which will include short – medium term actions to help implement the mode share targets in the STP. Encouraging people to use more sustainable forms of transport like public transport, cycling and walking, is part of the Government's policy framework to deal with both climate change and fossil fuel shortages into the future.

RECOMMENDATION 27

4.34 The Committee recommends that Park 'n Ride services be extended to new sites as a priority action under the Sustainable Transport Plan.

Agree.

A new Park and Ride facility is being constructed at Mawson. In addition feasibility studies are being undertaken in 2009 to consider the suitability of sites at Erindale and Mitchell for Park and Ride and Bike and Ride facilities. A Park and Ride Strategy will be included as part of the Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016 (when finalised).

RECOMMENDATION 28

4.35 The Committee recommends that ACTION's information services be improved and that targets be developed to assist with monitoring the implementation of those targets.

Agree in part.

ACTION has improved its information services and communication of services, leading up to the introduction of Network 08 and beyond. Improvements included the supply and distribution of new timetables, new timetable bollards, improved DDA compliant signage at interchanges and major bus stops, promotion of ACTION's bus services.

RECOMMENDATION 29

4.48 The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions be amended to require that each agency report on the actions it has taken to implement specified actions in The Sustainable Transport Plan, including initiatives to support employees' use of sustainable transport.

Agree in principle.

The STP progress reports in TAMS already include progress reports on implementation of STP actions by other agencies. The Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016 will also include a detailed reporting and monitoring framework to track the implementation of its actions across the Government, including STAP progress reports in the TAMS annual reports from 2009-10.

The Government continues to support the simplification of annual reporting requirements for the ACT public sector, acknowledging that this requires balancing the interests of simple and streamlined government reporting with the recommendations of Assembly Committees and public accountability. It is Government's view that policy implementation reporting should be co-ordinated by relevant policy departments, in this case TaMS, rather than included in each agency's reports.

RECOMMENDATION 30

4.50 The Committee recommends that when developing Network 08, that ACTION focus on the integration of services, convenience, frequency, safety, comprehensibility and accessibility of services.

Agree in principle

All of these principles were applied as far as possible in the development of Network 08. It should be recognised however that at times these principles may be in conflict. For example to achieve a more frequent service, it may be necessary for parallel services to be removed, requiring passengers to walk further to a bus stop.

RECOMMENDATION 31

4.57 The Committee recommends that resources be provided for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of workplace sustainable transport plans.

Agree in principle.

The ACT Government will consider how the workplace sustainable transport (transport option) plan, which has been undertaken with a large Commonwealth employer, could be implemented within ACT Government. The role of these and similar travel demand management programs will be addressed further in the Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016.

RECOMMENDATION 32

5.8 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government amend the Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT) to require public bodies to promote access, equity and equality.

Not agreed.

It is not necessary to legislate to ensure ACT Government agencies promote access, equity and equality. These outcomes can be achieved through a range of administrative mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATION 33

5.15 The Committee recommends that the Sustainable Transportation Contribution Fund proposed in the ACT Government's 2007 Draft ACT Parking Strategy be progressed.

Agree in principle.

Mechanisms to deliver a Parking Offset Fund are being investigated in 2009 to help finalise the Parking Strategy, which will form part of the Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016.

RECOMMENDATION 34

5.19 The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services favourably consider the strategic priorities of increasing patronage, improving economic sustainability, and improving environmental sustainability.

Agree.

These issues are being addressed in the development of a Public Transport Strategy on which TAMS has conducted substantial public consultation during 2009.

RECOMMENDATION 35

5.27 The Committee welcomes the proposed introduction of real-time information for ACTION bus services.

Noted.

The Government acknowledges the benefits of introducing real-time information technology and supports its introduction. The introduction of ACTION's new smartcard ticketing system is the first phase of the introduction of real time information is the provision of on-bus technology to display timing points. This facility is being implemented now with the new fleet. The next phase is to display this information on platforms, which will follow the implementation of the new ticket system.

RECOMMENDATION 36

5.28 The Committee recommends that bus travel time relative to cars be measured and reported.

Agree in principle.

The feasibility of establishing a program of travel time measures and reporting will be examined in the context of developing a Public Transport Strategy and the Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-16.

RECOMMENDATION 37

5.29 The Committee commends the Poetry in ACTION initiative and recommends that it be continued.

Noted.

The Government is supportive of the use of advertising on buses to promote the arts. This initiative is proposed to be ongoing.

RECOMMENDATION 38

5.32 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services suggests to PR Edge that the cover theme for future White Pages telephone directory for Canberra, Queanbeyan and Yass, relate to a sustainable transport theme, and if possible, include an image of the Canberra Bus Map on the front cover for the local directory.

Noted.

This suggestion will be considered for future marketing campaigns.

RECOMMENDATION 39

5.33 The Committee recommends that the maps in the Yellow Pages include ACTION bus routes and bus stops.

Noted.

The feasibility of this proposal has been explored. However, additional information on these maps would be difficult for customers to read.

RECOMMENDATION 40

5.34 The Committee recommends that ACTION should increase its marketing efforts and promote public awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of public transport use.

Agree.

Additional funding was provided in the 2007/08 Second Appropriation Bill to increase marketing and public awareness of ACTION's services.

RECOMMENDATION 41

5.36 The Committee recommends that every ACTION bus stop should provide a user-friendly current timetable and route map, and information about the closest alternate route bus stop.

Agree in principle.

ACTION continues to enhance the provision of information at bus stops, with the successful implementation of bollards at major stops and interchanges. ACTION aims to provide timetable information at every alternate stop as an on-going program of customer improvement.

RECOMMENDATION 42

5.57 The Committee recommends that the Sustainable Transport Plan not be substantially amended in relation to its references to busways.

Agree.

The *Sustainable Transport Plan* (STP) provides a strategic framework to guide planning, development and implementation of a sustainable transport system for Canberra over a twenty-five year period. The STP has identified busways, will form part of the forward planning for improved services as part of the Sustainable Transport Action Plan.

The Government's implementation of the STP - and commitment to achieving the STP mode share targets - continues to be progressed in 2009 through the development of the Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016. Included in this plan will be a Public Transport Strategy that sets out a long-term backbone network for the public transport system. It is important to establish the long-term geography of the transport system before making detailed decisions about particular technologies (busways, light rail etc).

RECOMMENDATION 43

5.62 The Committee recommends that ACTION assess the feasibility of reintroducing a loop bus service or city circulator through Central Canberra and the Parliamentary Zone.

Agree.

The Department of Territory and Municipal Services is working with the Canberra CBD Limited on a feasibility study to define the route.

RECOMMENDATION 44

5.69 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government encourage major employers in the ACT, including the ACT public service, to introduce bike fleets at their workplaces.

Agree.

The ACT Government will promote bike fleets at work places as part of any Travelsmart work place projects. A number of ACT Government workplaces, including Macarthur House (TAMS and DECCEW) already have bike fleets in place.

RECOMMENDATION 45

5.70 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess the Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney initiatives on inner-city cycling as part of an assessment of a possible trial of a free bike hire service for Canberra's town centres and universities.

Noted.

The ACT Government will examine the initiatives that support cycling, including free bike hire schemes, through the development of a cycling strategy as part of the Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010-2016.

RECOMMENDATION 46

5.77 The Committee recommends that ACTION review the frequency of services as a priority issue and increase frequency where that would be consistent with human rights principles, stakeholder feedback and the goals of the Sustainable Transport Plan.

Agree.

The Government has already made progress towards improving the frequency of public transport services since this report was tabled. The REDEX Trial will also provide high frequency services.

In the longer term, the Public Transport Strategy that is currently being developed proposes a "frequent network" of rapid and local services to form a fast, reliable backbone for public transport in Canberra by 2031. Rather than focussing on frequency *per se*, the *Draft Strategic Public Transport Network Plan* proposes a minimum speed targets for the frequent network. A speed standard means that these particular routes would attract priority for infrastructure spending and public transport priority measures (bus lanes, rapid transit etc) to ensure the speed standard is maintained when congestion increases.

Public consultation conducted in August 2009 has generated many constructive comments about the proposed strategic network, which will be included in a consultation report for release in late 2009, and used to inform the final PT Strategy for release in 2010.

RECOMMENDATION 47

5.100 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government progress the upgrading, at the earliest opportunity, of the bus interchanges at Woden and Belconnen.

Agree.

The Government continues to progress planning for upgraded interchange facilities as part of a larger plan to improve bus operations in and around the Belconnen Town Centre. These improvements will involve layover and additional bus stop facilities as well as the integration of bus stop facilities into the Westfield Shopping Centre. These developments are currently being constructed and scheduled to be completed by the end of next year

Relevant agencies on behalf of the Government have commenced negotiations with Westfield regarding Woden bus interchange.