

30 October 2019

By email to [budgetconsultation@act.gov.au](mailto:budgetconsultation@act.gov.au)

### **Budget submission: transport**

I recommend that the ACT Government allocate \$2 million in 2020-21 to arresting the decline in the number of Canberrans who reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse emissions by travelling to work as car passengers, rather than as car drivers.

Such projects could include:

- a review of the potential for transit lanes and related measures to improve road utilisation, reduce traffic congestion, and reduce greenhouse emissions;
- identify suitable locations and designs for trial projects; and
- implement trial projects.

\$2 million would bring total funding for car passenger travel (8% of commuters) to only about 1% of total funding for public transport (8% of commuters), or one-eighth of infrastructure funding for walking and cycling (8% of commuters).

### **Rationale**

The proportion of Canberra commuters who drove cars rose from 73.3% in 2011 to 73.8% in 2016.

The main cause of this increase was the number of commuters who switched from car passenger seats to car driver seats – down from 8.6% in 2011 to 7.3% in 2016.

Converting strategic sections of road lanes to transit lanes is an inexpensive way to improve road utilisation, reduce congestion delays for all traffic, and reduce the number of commuting cars (and therefore reduce air pollution and greenhouse emissions).

I provide a brief explanation on the following background paper, and will be happy to provide further information and assistance on request

With my best regards

*[Original signed]*

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Founder and former Chair, Living Streets Canberra  
Retiring third term Chair, North Canberra Community Council  
Former Executive Officer, Pedal Power

**BACKGROUND: allocation of \$2 million in 2020-21 to arresting the decline in the number of Canberrans who travel to work as car passengers, rather than as car drivers.**

The proportion of Canberra commuters who drove cars rose from 73.3% in 2011 to 73.8% in 2016. More car drivers means more traffic congestion, more air pollution and more greenhouse emissions.

*"Demand for public transport in Canberra has grown in the last 10 years, but (uniquely among the six conurbations examined by this Audit) at a lower rate than for cars."<sup>1</sup>*

The explanation is in the following table. The main cause of our increasing car use was the number of commuters who switched from car passenger seats to car driver seats – down from 8.6% in 2011 to 7.3% in 2016. This fall exceeded the combined increases in walking, cycling and public transport.

Journey to work travel mode	Commuters, 2011 census	Commuters, 2016 census	Infrastructure funding, 2018-19
Car as driver	122,693 (73.3%)	131,715 (73.8%)	\$64 m
Car as passenger	14,344 (8.6%)	13,011 (7.3%)	\$0
Public transport	13,078 (7.8%)	14,641 (8.2%)	\$80 m
Walk or cycle	12,802 (6.4%)	14,671 (8.2%)	\$17.4 m

An initial allocation of \$2 million, towards arresting the decline in the number of Canberrans who travel to work as car passengers (rather than as car drivers) could fund projects such as:

- a review of the potential for transit lanes and related measures to improve road utilisation, reduce traffic congestion, and reduce greenhouse emissions;
- identify suitable locations and designs for trial projects; and
- implement trial projects.

\$2 million is equal to \$154 per car passenger commuter. This compares with about \$1,200 per walking or cycling commuter, and \$14,000 in operating cost subsidies and infrastructure costs for each public transport commuter.

**Review the potential for transit lanes and related measures to improve road utilisation, reduce traffic congestion, and reduce greenhouse emissions**

Transit lanes and related measures

“Three for free” provides free parking for drivers who carry two or more passengers. The ACT “three for free” scheme was terminated in July 2019.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Infrastructure Australia, August 2019, *Urban Transport Crowding and Congestion: The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019: Supplementary report*, <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/urban-transport-crowding-and-congestion>

2 RiotACT, 24 June 2019, “No more Three for free at short notice?” <https://the-riotact.com/ask-riotact-no-more-three-for-free-at-short-notice/308495>.

A transit lane is a traffic lane that is restricted to buses, taxis, motorcycles and private vehicles that carry a minimum number of occupants. A T2 lane may be used by a vehicle with at least two occupants. A T3 lane may be used by a vehicle with at least three occupants.

Canberra's only transit lane is a T2 lane along each side of a 4 km section of Adelaide Avenue.

#### Previous reviews

A 2012 study found that the Adelaide Avenue transit lane saved only 14 seconds of travel time during peak hours, and that the 1.3 km bus lane along Flemington Road (which could be converted to a transit lane) saved only nine seconds.<sup>3</sup>

Those findings drastically understate the potential time saving benefits of those transit lanes:

- time savings for the Adelaide Avenue transit lane would be much greater if it were extended into the congested approach to the traffic signals at the intersection of Canberra Avenue and Coronation Drive, and into the congested approach to the Yarra Glen/Yamba Drive/Melrose Drive roundabout.
  - The transit lane currently terminates 800 metres before the traffic signals, and 2 km before the roundabout. A transit lane in the 200 metres closest to an intersection can save up to two minutes of travel time.
- In 2012 The Flemington Road/Federal Highway intersection was operating at close to 100% of capacity. The population of Gungahlin increased from 47,303 in 2011 to 71,142 in 2016. By 2016 the intersection was well above capacity, with congested peak traffic extending back 1.5 km to the intersection of Flemington Road with Sandford Street. Travel time savings had increased to about four minutes.

3 AECOM, 2012, *Transit Lane Warrants Study*, Prepared for Roads ACT.  
[http://www.tams.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/397517/Transit\\_Lane\\_Study.pdf](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/397517/Transit_Lane_Study.pdf)