



2019-20 Budget Submission

Prepared for the ACT Government

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About the NRMA

Better transport infrastructure has been a core focus of the NRMA since 1920 when our founders lobbied for improvements to the condition of Parramatta Road in Sydney. Independent advocacy was the foundation activity of the organisation and remains critical to who we are as we approach our first centenary.

The NRMA has grown to one of the largest tourism and transport companies in Australia, representing over 2.6 million Australians principally from NSW and the ACT. The NRMA provides motoring, transport and tourism services to our Members and the community.

Today, the NRMA works with policy makers and industry leaders to advocate for transport solutions that help solve key pain points such as congestion, access and affordability and connect people and communities. The NRMA is passionate about facilitating travel across Australia, recognising the vital role tourism plays in supporting regional communities.

By working together with all levels of government to deliver integrated transport and tourism options we can provide for the future growth of our communities and continue to keep people moving for generations to come.



Comments and Queries

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Introduction

The NRMA is among the largest member organisations in Australia, with 2.6 million Members across the ACT and NSW. As we approach our centenary in 2020, we reflect on a proud history of keeping our Members moving and determine where we can deliver the greatest value to our Members and the broader community for the next 100 years.

At the NRMA, we are no longer just a roads and motorists organisation, but represent one of the largest transport and tourism companies in the nation. Our interests stretch far beyond roadside assistance and car servicing to include Thrifty Car Rentals, Travelodge, the Kurrajong Hotel, NRMA Parks and Resorts and share platforms Divvy and Camplify that address mobility and travel needs within the community.

We recognise our Members are not only motorists; they are public transport users, cyclists, and visitors that travel locally and abroad for work, education, healthcare and leisure. As such, the NRMA continues to champion infrastructure projects, public transport investment and road safety initiatives that improve connectivity and tourism, relieve congestion, and keep our Members safe.

The ACT Government has made substantial investment in game-changing road and transport infrastructure projects which the NRMA supports including automated vehicle trials, Canberra Metro, progress on the full duplication of Gundaroo Drive and cycleways to Belconnen. Recently announced CTP reforms will also provide greater coverage and relieve cost pressures on families.

The ACT Governments Zero Emissions Policy (*The ACT's Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan 2018-21*) is wholeheartedly supported by the NRMA in reducing emissions and facilitating the expansion of alternative drive-trains in Australia.

But more could be done to improve transport and tourism in the Territory.

Congestion in the ACT continues to impact on Canberrans' daily lives. The recently released AAA *Road Congestion in Australia* report shows that average speeds in Canberra have fallen on average by 1 per cent over a 5.5 year period. The report also found for 7 out of 8 road routes, Canberra's AM peak journeys are taking longer with only the Belconnen to Civic route showing a higher average speed travelled.

Canberra is currently the third most expensive capital city for fuel in Australia (after Hobart and Darwin), with fuel costing ACT families around \$3,961 per year on average.

There is also further opportunity to leverage cross-border relationships with NSW to the Capital Country and promote the Territory as the gateway to this region, and bolster visitation through events and festivals.

As such, the NRMA is seeking investment in William Slim and Gundaroo Drive duplication as priority projects. Giving motorists access to fuel prices through real-time data must be a focus to reduce the cost of motoring. Providing funding and timetable commitments for critical public transport initiatives including Stage 2 of Canberra Light Rail, improvements to ACTION Buses and cycle ways across the Territory will improve connectivity.

The NRMA also seeks to ensure proposed changes to the Graduating Licensing Scheme are adequately funded and resourced to ensure a smooth transition and awareness among young drivers.

We were born to keep you moving

In framing our submission to the 2019-20 ACT Budget, the NRMA is seeking to promote programs, initiatives and key infrastructure projects that align with the values of our organisation. As our organisation grows and evolves, so too do our priorities and focus.

We have 2.6 million Members, but five million customers across our roadside assistance, car rental, and accommodation and travel businesses. The role of the NRMA is to offer and advocate for effective mobility options that improve Member journeys, enhance visitor experiences, and facilitate the next generation of mobility in the Territory and Australia.

Peace of Mind

Members of the community deserve to be able to use our roads, public transport networks, cycle lanes and footpaths without limitations or compromise to personal safety or security. The NRMA believes that governments, transport operators and individuals have an obligation to prioritise safety so that the whole community has peace of mind as they go about their day-to-day activities getting from point A to point B.

We need to invest in road and public transport infrastructure, protect vulnerable road users, as well as encourage safer driving and the purchase of safer vehicles. There is a need to improve the amenity and reliability of public transport services and interchanges to mitigate safety concerns that prevent people from utilising these services, particularly late at night or in remote areas.

In the ACT, the William Slim Drive and full Gundaroo Drive duplications, Barton Flyover and continued investment in road safety initiatives are necessary to improve the quality of the road network, reduce congestion and ensure road users remain safe. Appropriately funding changes to the Territory's Graduating Licensing System will also help improve safety outcomes of young drivers.

The ACT Government must also continue to invest in innovative technology solutions that will deliver the next step-change in road safety, vehicle emissions and mobility as we head to an autonomous future.

Value for Money

The NRMA recognises that flat household incomes and the rising cost of living are placing greater pressure on Australian households. Transport costs (including fuel) represent up to one seventh of the total average family income in the ACT, while some households have experienced a 70 per cent increase in electricity costs over the past eight years¹. The ACT also had one of the highest premiums in the country; recent changes to the CTP scheme will relieve cost pressures for many Canberrans, and provide timely improvements to the scheme.

¹ AAA (2018) Transport Affordability Index, June Quarter 2018

Canberra is also the third most expensive capital city for fuel in Australia (after Hobart and Darwin), with fuel costing ACT families around \$3,961 per year on average. Recognising the cost of motoring represents a substantial proportion of the household budget, the NRMA remains passionate about fuel price transparency in the ACT, providing the community with real-time information that can contribute to significant transport cost savings each year.

The NRMA seeks to ensure all modes of transport, whether they be the car, bus, or rail, are affordable and equitable so members of the community remain connected to employment opportunities, education, healthcare and holiday destinations.

Stage 2 of the Canberra Metro, bus franchising and integrated park and ride strategies all provide an opportunity to deliver cheaper and improved services, while providing alternative modes of transport to the citizens of the ACT while delivering cost savings to government.

Further, the NRMA believes that all Australians should have access to affordable holiday options, providing an opportunity to recharge and reconnect with family.

Discovery

There is inherent value in connecting with family and discovering different destinations through travel. Providing compelling reasons to visit and facilitating access to the nation's capital through road, rail and air transport is critical to the success of the tourism sector.

Facilitating visitation through tourism promotion and major events, visitor experiences and transport connectivity remain top priorities for the NRMA. The NRMA wants Australians to fall in love with Australia, recognising that approximately 85 per cent of domestic overnight trips are completed by car.

The NRMA has long assisted Members to discover the best holiday destinations and ensure they arrive safely at their destination. The NRMA provides roadside assistance to 270,000 travellers each year, and is now the second largest operator of holiday parks across Australia.

Facilitating tourism to Canberra and the surrounding regions is also a way of diversifying the economic base of these communities. The NRMA's *Are we there yet?* tourism report highlighted that with the right level of investment, visitor nights could increase to 16.5 million by 2026-27, contributing \$3.1 billion in overnight visitor expenditure to the ACT.

Approximately 77 per cent of visitors to the ACT travel by car, contributing 50 per cent of visitor expenditure in the capital. Further, caravan and camping generated \$24 million in visitor expenditure in 2016-17, growing an average 7 per cent each year².

Considerable work has already begun in this space. The ACT has invested in its calendar of events and cultural attractions, providing an incentive for people to travel. However more needs to be done. Attracting direct international flights to Canberra Airport will further facilitate visitation from our key international markets.

² NRMA (2018) ACT Are We There Yet? The current and future value of tourism to the ACT

International flights from Canberra have also cemented the city's role as a hub for regional tourism and present opportunities for tourism and for rural producers in the surrounding areas. The Memorandum of Understanding with the NSW Government will further strengthen trade, transport and tourism opportunities between Canberra and southern NSW.

Community

For the NRMA, community is about belonging and improving the places in which people live, work and holiday. It's about improving quality of life by simplifying the movement and connectivity of individuals and groups in both urban and rural environments.

The right mix of new and improved motorways, rail infrastructure and parking facilities, aided with technological initiatives such as parking share and vehicle autonomy, will support individual freedom and improve fair and equitable mobility options.

Access to transport is vital to ensure people remain connected to economic and education opportunities as well as vital health and social services. Without access to transport, communities are denied the opportunity to participate fully in society and therefore are likely to be marginalised.

Despite the recent investment in public transport infrastructure, there is still a need to provide further investment to meet current and future challenges associated with urban growth. This must include evaluating current forms of public transport and identifying ways to better operate, deliver enhancements, and connect to the broader network.

2019-20 Budget Recommendations

The NRMA's 2019-20 Budget Submission is seeking to promote programs, initiatives and key infrastructure projects that align with the strategic priorities and values of our organisation, balancing social outcomes, Member values and business sustainability.

The NRMA urges the ACT Government to consider these recommendations carefully as they offer the greatest opportunity to reduce congestion, improve connectivity and social engagement and save lives on ACT roads.

2019-20 Budget Priorities

Peace of Mind

Establish a Community Road Safety Fund and hypothecate all funds to road safety initiatives including enforcement, education and road improvements.

Allocate funding for the implementation of the proposed recommendations of the ACT Graduated Licensing Scheme for young drivers.

Increase funding to support road safety campaigns, including continued education around the 'a metre matters' rule for cyclists and initiatives for groups overrepresented in crash statistics (older and younger drivers)

Commit to a fully transparent road maintenance fund to support upgrades to the ACT road infrastructure network.

Implement the ACT Government's response to the 2017 Auditor General Report into road maintenance.

Commit further funding for the William Slim Drive duplication.

Provide timeline and funding commitments for the full duplication of Gundaroo Drive.

Begin planning works for the Barton Highway Flyover, using testing data from the traffic light installation to guide development.

Incorporate improved links between Canberra and the Central West, Orana and Murray-Murrumbidgee regions in future transport planning, including for freight.

Value for Money

Mandate real-time fuel pricing in the ACT with the development of appropriate reporting method either through a website or associated app.

Make publically available the benchmarking results for ACTION services and investigate alternative models for service delivery.

Provide timetable and funding commitments for Stage 2 of the Light Rail Network, linking major town centres, and eventually connecting to Canberra Airport.

Investigate extending the Light Rail Network to the airport with a high-frequency shuttle bus service operating until feasible to extend the network.

Continue to progress integrated transport solutions including the Integrated Transport Network – Parking strategy.

Expand the Park and Ride facilities program to support multi-modal transport use and incorporate smart ticketing solutions to incentivise commuter use.

Establish a grant fund for enabling works to support industry rollout non-proprietary fast charging infrastructure throughout the ACT to support electric vehicle owners and bolster the future visitor economy.

Provide funding to actively promote consumer trials of automated vehicles in specific urban locations (sandboxing and road network testing).

Discovery

Maintain funding commitments for VisitCanberra in real terms in the 2019-20 and forward estimates.

Revise current Tourism 2020 strategy and plan next growth targets for the sector.

Boost funding for major event development and acquisition, including partnerships with the Capital's cultural institutions.

Fund utility work at Stromlo Forest Park to incentivise tourism development at this site, including stop-over caravan and camping opportunities.

Community

Further investigate the feasibility of faster rail service between Canberra and Sydney with the NSW Government.

The ACT Government should fund a pilot program to improve mobility for people living with disabilities.

Appropriately plan infrastructure and transportation links to Molonglo Valley



2019-20 Budget Priorities

Peace of Mind – Road Safety Initiatives

Community Road Safety Fund

As of 16 October 2018, nine people had lost their lives on ACT roads. This is nearly double the annual road toll of 2017 where five people were tragically killed.³ While jurisdictions across Australia and overseas have also reported an upward trend in fatalities in recent years, it is crucial that we act now to address this growing concern.

More investment is needed to help bring down the road toll which includes funding road improvements, road safety education and increased enforcement. The NRMA believes that revenue raised from speed cameras should be invested back into funding road safety measures. Overall revenue from traffic fines is forecast to raise nearly \$30 million this financial year.

This extra road safety funding should be overseen by an independent panel of experts brought together to ensure that the hypothecation of traffic fine revenue is adequately allocated and expended on road safety measures, and that this information is made publicly available.

Graduating Licensing Scheme

Younger drivers in the ACT continue to be overrepresented in road crashes. From 2006 – 2017, 15 young drivers aged 17-24 lost their lives on ACT roads.⁴ The NRMA supports the revised measures identified in the ACT Government's discussion paper *Your Plates: ACT Graduated Licensing Scheme Reform*⁵ for younger drivers. Research both locally and internationally has proven that comprehensive and evidence based Graduated Licensing Schemes (GLS) are effective in improving road safety outcomes for younger drivers.

The NRMA believes appropriate funding should be made available to enact recommendations extending from the review, including awareness and education campaigns for younger drivers on the changes.

Recommendation

Establish a Community Road Safety Fund and hypothecate all funds to road safety initiatives including enforcement, education and road improvements.

Allocate funding for the implementation of the proposed ACT Graduated Licensing Scheme for young drivers.

³ ACT Policing. (2018). ACT Road Toll. <https://policenews.act.gov.au/crime-statistics-and-data/road-toll>

⁴ ACT Government. (2018). Reviewing the process from L plates to no plates. April – May 2018.

⁵ ACT Government. (2018). Justice and Community Safety Directorate Discussion Paper – Reviewing The Process From L Plates To No Plates.

Cycleways

The ACT has the highest cycling rate in Australia, with 47 per cent of Canberrans indicating they had cycled on at least one occasion in the past year, compared to 37.4 per cent of Australians nationally⁶. Approximately 26 per cent of the ACT population cycle weekly, with 103,000 trips completed weekly⁷.

The NRMA supports the additional \$30 million in active travel infrastructure measures announced in the 2018-19 budget for ongoing renewal of town centres with better walking and cycling links.

As alternative modes of transport become more common for commuters and motorists, the ACT Government will need to invest in appropriate road safety measures to ensure all road users remain safe, including cyclists.

Further, the NRMA notes the end of the current trial of the 'a metre matters' rule for cyclists in the ACT. The NRMA supports the continuation of this rule and education activities to inform motorists, cyclists and pedestrians of their obligations while on the road and in mixed-used precincts.

Recommendation

Increase funding to support road safety campaigns, including continued education around the 'a metre matters' rule for cyclists and initiatives for groups overrepresented in crash statistics (older and younger drivers)

⁶ Canberra Times (2014) Canberra the Cycling Capital of Australia, study finds <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/canberra-the-cycling-capital-of-australia-study-finds-20140724-zwf8p.html>

⁷ Australian Bicycle Council (2017) 2017 National Cycle Participation

Peace of Mind – Infrastructure

Dedicated Road Maintenance Funding

The 2017 Auditor-General report into road maintenance revealed the infrastructure backlog in the territory has increased more than 400 per cent since 2010-11, with the cost of bringing the local road network up to standard estimated at \$53 million in 2015-16 and rising to \$71 million in 2019-20⁸.

It is essential that funds are made available to maintain the ACT's 3,300 kilometre road network. The expansion of the network throughout the ACT and the release of new land corridors for urban development makes it imperative that a long term road maintenance plan is developed.

NRMA endorses the ACT Government's response to the 2017 Auditor-General report with particular reference to dealing with operational plans, providing timely data on asset conditions and addressing the backlog. The Auditor General recommended the ACT Government address their concerns in these areas to augment road maintenance in the ACT. The NRMA also supports the allocation of \$1.2 million in the 2018-19 budget to improve asset management in the transport directorate.

The NRMA urges the ACT Government to provide necessary funding allocations for maintenance of the road network in all future budgets, including full transparency of which particular projects will receive funding and when. Appropriate allocations based on the life cycle of assets will ensure the long term sustainability of the ACT road network.

Recommendation

Commit to a fully transparent road maintenance fund to support upgrades to the ACT road infrastructure network.

Implement the ACT Government's response to the 2017 Auditor General Report into road maintenance.

William Slim Drive Duplication

NRMA welcomed the ACT Government's announcement to duplicate William Slim Drive from Ginninderra Drive to the Barton Highway to help reduce congestion between Gungahlin and Belconnen. The NRMA understands design works for the William Slim Drive duplication were completed in October 2013. Currently \$250,000 has been allocated in the 2018-19 ACT budget to commence construction.

As the population of the Gungahlin region continues to grow, the road network connecting Gungahlin with Belconnen has become increasingly congested, especially during the peak traffic periods. The NRMA is seeking further funding and timetable commitments in the 2019-20 Budget to construct this duplication and alleviate growing congestion.

⁸ ACT Audit Office (2017) ACT Auditor-General's Report Maintenance of Selected Road Infrastructure Assets Report No 5/2017 p. 19

Recommendation

Commit further funding for the William Slim Drive duplication

Full Gundaroo Drive Duplication

The NRMA welcomed the \$30 million announced in 2017 for Stage 2 of the duplication of Gundaroo Drive from Gungahlin Drive to the Barton Highway. The NRMA also supports the development of priority bus infrastructure to support commuter journeys.

However, growing congestion bottlenecks on this road, which are becoming more severe during peak periods, means that full duplication of Gundaroo Drive is critical. The NRMA urges the ACT Government to commence planning to duplicate the Gundaroo Drive section between the Barton Highway and Horse Park Drive.

Recommendation

Provide timeline and funding commitments for the full duplication of Gundaroo Drive.

Barton Highway Flyover

The Barton Highway is a strategically important arterial road linking Canberra with the surrounding regional centres of NSW. For the Yass Valley and the Southern Highlands, the Barton Highway acts as a main connection between their locales and Canberra. The Highway also serves as an important connection for freight traffic and tourism.

However, when compared to other similar roads, the Barton Highway has a significantly higher crash rate. Over the period 2010 to 2014, there have been more than 500 crashes at the Barton Highway-Gundaroo Drive-William Slim Drive roundabout, making it by far the most common site for a crash in the ACT. The NRMA is aware that since the installation of the traffic lights, there has been a 50 per cent reduction in crashes at this junction.

The NRMA notes the installation of traffic lights at the roundabout to improve traffic flows and minimise congestion. However, as the Gungahlin and Belconnen town centres continue to grow, this solution will not be adequate to accommodate the long term traffic flows of the region. The effectiveness of the traffic lights will therefore need to be monitored, and testing data from the traffic light installation should be used to inform the development plans of the Barton Highway flyover.

A long term solution is required to provide a grade separation of the intersection, eliminating congestion and improving road safety. The NRMA urges the ACT Government to fund planning of the Barton Highway Flyover in the 2019-20 Budget.

The Barton Highway presents a unique challenge in encouraging cross-border cooperation in the delivery of current and future infrastructure upgrades to this Highway. The NRMA still contends that

both the ACT and NSW Governments should seek the inclusion of this project on Infrastructure Australia's *Project Initiatives* list.

Recommendation

Begin planning works for the Barton Highway Flyover, using testing data from the traffic light installation to guide development.

Building transport links into NSW

The NSW Government's recently released *Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan* introduces a new Regional Transport Network Model which identifies Canberra as a Global Gateway City and has an emphasis on creating efficient east-west connections throughout NSW and the ACT.

While Canberra has strong transport links to Sydney, South East NSW and the South Coast, a new hub and spoke model of service delivery will require different regional planning and improved movement corridors between Canberra and Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Griffith and Albury. An example of this working effectively is the business opportunities that have opened up between Dubbo and Canberra as a result of a new flight route.

In particular, there is a need for the ACT Government to assess and resolve freight supply chain and infrastructure issues across the Canberra region in order to successfully position Canberra as a regional trade hub.

Recommendation

Incorporate improved links between Canberra and the Central West, Orana and Murray-Murrumbidgee regions in future transport planning, including for freight.



Value for money

The ACT continues to have a higher passenger vehicle ownership rate per 1,000 population, than the more populous states, NSW, Victoria and Queensland⁹. For Canberra, the average household spends \$17,034 per annum on transport, equating to 12.4 per cent of total household income¹⁰. These figures now place Canberra as the fifth most expensive capital city in Australia for transport costs.

There is a need to address the cost of transport by providing affordable, reliable and efficient transport solutions to address mobility and affordability issues. More importantly, it provides the community with greater choice in how they travel and commute, without the need to rely solely on car transportation.

As urban growth intensifies, car movements will not be the most effective way to move around. Investment in cycling, park and ride facilities, car share, electric vehicles and light rail all have a role to play in future mobility and should be funded and planned for appropriately.

Real-time fuel information

The NRMA has been a strong advocate for full price transparency in the retail fuel market. By providing motorists with real-time fuel information on the location and price of various fuel types, there is an opportunity to provide consumers with real choice and savings.

Average unleaded prices in Canberra are currently 9.6 cents per litre more expensive than in the Sydney market. The NRMA believes there is an opportunity to improve this price differential by providing motorists with real-time information.

The NRMA campaigned successfully for the introduction of real time petrol prices in NSW, with the FuelCheck website introduced by the NSW Government on the 24 August 2016. The NRMA Fuel App launched the same day, with 796,000 downloads to date.

The ACT Government should consider implementing a solution that provides ACT residents access to real time prices, given the current data infrastructure already exists for all major petrol stations located in the ACT.

Recommendation

Mandate real-time fuel pricing in the ACT with the development of appropriate reporting method either through a website or associated app.

ACTION bus services

Bus services will continue to play an integral role in moving people around the Capital, with the NRMA noting an 11 per cent increase in total number of passengers carried on the ACT Internal Omnibus Network (ACTION) over the period 1999-00 to 2013-14. However, this increase was only

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018) 9309.0 - Motor Vehicle Census Australia, July 2018

¹⁰ AAA Transport Affordability Index June 2018

at around half the rate of population growth, with declines also recorded in customer satisfaction between 2008-09 (87 per cent) and 2013-14 (65 per cent). Further, the cost recovery ratio for ACTION declined from 24 per cent to 17 per cent over the 12-year period to 2013-14¹¹.

The NRMA notes the Government's recent attempts to improve the reliability, frequency and efficiency of ACTION services, and the expected investment in a new fleet over the next four years. The NRMA believes, however, that current benchmarking testing for ACTION should be made public, and where further efficiencies are sought, private sector involvement should be reconsidered as a potential solution to the future operation of this service.

The NRMA welcomes the ACT Government's recent announcement of nine new Rapid routes that will offer more frequent services from mid-2018, with four routes coming into operation 23 July 2018. The network can be enhanced through more park and ride options across the Rapid network, an increase in flexible, demand responsive services for travellers who cannot get to bus stops or interchanges to make it easier to combine active travel options and public transport use.

Private sector involvement in the delivery of transport services can improve service delivery, reduce costs for travellers, while delivering economies of scale and cost savings to government. It is estimated bus services cost approximately \$2.8 billion each year to operate, with around 20-25 per cent of this cost paid by passengers, and the remaining 75-80 per cent paid by government. Specifically, subsidies for the ACTION services have increased from \$60 million in 2005-06¹² to an estimated \$103m in 2015-16¹³. It is estimated that the cost savings to government of transitioning public operation of bus services to the private sector can range between 20-55 per cent¹⁴.

Recommendation

Make publically available the benchmarking results for ACTION services and investigate alternative models for service delivery.

The Light Rail Network

The Light Rail Network will provide an alternative mode of transport that will improve the passenger experience and reduce congestion and transport times by up to 30 per cent. Light rail movements between the City and Gungahlin are forecast to grow to over 13,000 by 2021 and over 20,000 by 2031.

NRMA welcomed the \$10 million announcement in the 2018-19 budget for the next stage of planning, design and enabling works for Stage 2 of the Light Rail Network from the City to Woden. Planning should also begin to extend the Light Rail Network to service major urban centres including Russell, Duntroon, and eventually Canberra Airport, providing seamless connectivity to major transport hubs.

¹¹ MRcagney (2015) *ACTION Expenditure Review: Final Public Report*, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, 25 March 2015

¹² Tourism & Transport Forum (2016) *On the buses: The benefits of private sector involvement in the delivery of bus services*, February 2016

¹³ ACT Government (2016) *Budget 2016-17: Budget Statements*

¹⁴ Tourism & Transport Forum (2016) *On the buses: The benefits of private sector involvement in the delivery of bus services*, February 2016

Planning should not take place in isolation from other transport developments including bus services and park and ride facilities, as well as other key plans such as the National Capital Authority's Kings and Commonwealth Design Strategy.

Light Rail extension to airport

Currently, more than 30,000 people travel to and from Canberra Airport every day. These numbers will more than double within the next decade. To leverage the ACT Government's significant investment in Canberra Airport, seamless connections between Civic, the suburbs and the airport are required.

As the Airport Express Bus ceased operation in September 2017, travelers are currently reliant on an ACTION Bus Service. The NRMA considers that the current service, which costs \$27 for a single trip and runs every 30 minutes on weekdays and every hour on a Sunday, does not meet the needs of Canberra residents or travelers.

The NRMA supports Canberra Airport's bid to have the Light Rail Network extended to the airport. The NRMA endorses an east to west connection linking Civic to the airport that takes in key tourist, employment and educational sites such as New Acton, Canberra Institute of Technology, Anzac Parade (Australian War Memorial) and Duntroon/University of New South Wales Defence Force Academy.

While investigations are underway, the ACT Government should provide a high-frequency shuttle bus service, modelled on Melbourne's successful SkyBus.

Recommendation

Provide timetable and funding commitments for Stage 2 of the Light Rail Network, linking major town centres, and eventually connecting to Canberra Airport.

Investigate extending the Light Rail Network to the airport with a high-frequency shuttle bus service operating until feasible to extend the network.

ACT Parking Strategy

The ACT Government's *Integrated Transport Network – Parking* strategy offers the opportunity to re-engineer travel behaviour to reduce congestion and encourage efficiencies in vehicle movements in densely populated areas.

The NRMA supports innovative thinking on parking pricing to influence demand. However, associated improvements must also occur in public transport and park and ride services to support changed travel behaviour. This will be particularly important with the introduction of Light Rail, as well as traffic management changes proposed in the NCA's Kings and Commonwealth Design Strategy.

The NRMA would encourage the ACT Government to continue to investigate best-practice demand management models for parking in the CBD and surrounds.

Properly managing parking supply and demand can increase the social and economic vitality of communities and encourage visitation. Additionally, if provided within close proximity of mass transport, parking can increase patronage and reduce congestion on roads.

Improved Park and Ride Facilities

The NRMA is fully supportive of integrated transport solutions that encourage the use of several modes of transport, including public transport. The NRMA's own research has clearly identified that park and ride facilities at key transport interchanges are an important way to improve the attractiveness of public transport.

Commuter car parking hubs adjacent to stations provide access to public transport and provide a solution to the parking issues faced daily by commuters. To incentivise use, public transport ticketing should be integrated with commuter car parks, and non-users of public transport who utilise commuter car parks should be charged based on time and duration of stay.

The NRMA strongly encourages the Government to expand park and ride facilities.

Recommendation

Continue to progress integrated transport solutions including the Integrated Transport Network – Parking strategy

Expand the Park and Ride facilities program to support multi-modal transport use and incorporate smart ticketing solutions to incentivise commuter use.

Electric Vehicles

Manufacturers and technology companies are rapidly moving the automotive industry towards an electric and automated future. Governments overseas are supporting the transition by putting in place petrol and diesel bans aimed at achieving zero emissions.

With Australian commercial vehicle manufacturing now ceased, we are fully reliant on importing vehicles for personal and commercial use. With such a significant emphasis on electrification worldwide, it is essential that we plan and prepare for an expanded electric vehicle fleet.

In 2018, the NRMA welcomed the ACT Government's *Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan* aimed at pursuing Australia's most ambitious emissions reduction effort across the transport fleet, including the provision of \$456,000 to install 50 new electric vehicle charging stations at ACT Government sites across Canberra.

In addition to these destination-type chargers, fast chargers are a vital component of an electric vehicle future, facilitating mid-journey charging for motorists and encouraging visitation.

The NRMA has already committed \$10 million to establish at least 40 fast charging stations around NSW and the ACT to support greater visitor dispersal and address 'range anxiety' for current and potential electric vehicle owners.

The ACT now has an opportunity to build on its previous commitments by funding enabling works for fast charging sites within the ACT.

A major barrier to privately-funded fast charging infrastructure is associated enabling works, which can add significant cost depending on location and local electricity grid conditions. Investment in this important infrastructure will progress the ACT's position as Australia's leader in clean transport.

Recommendation

Establish a grant fund for enabling works to support industry rollout non-proprietary fast charging infrastructure throughout the ACT to support electric vehicle owners and bolster the future visitor economy.

Connected and Automated Vehicle Trials

The growth of connected and automated vehicles will usher in enormous safety benefits that are likely to be spread broadly throughout the community. Greatly improved safety, better transport interconnectivity, reduced emissions and congestion improvements are just some of the promised benefits of a connected and automated vehicle future.

The NRMA commends the ACT Government for its previous investment in the CAN Drive program, aimed at improving automated technology and safety.

With fully automated vehicles likely to be on our roads from 2025, the ACT Government should actively promote the ACT as the destination of choice for connected and automated vehicle trials. Original equipment manufacturers and shuttle operators should be invited and encouraged to run citizen focused trials similar to the Volvo Drive Me project to encourage understanding and acceptance of these technologies among the community.

Broad acceptance of these technologies will only occur if consumers deem them to be safe and useful to their everyday needs. This has been realised by companies such as Volvo, who are currently trialling connected and automated vehicles on commuter routes using volunteer members of the public.

The ACT Government should encourage trials to be conducted in specifically defined areas (sandboxing), as well as across the broader road network (road network testing), to demonstrate the benefits of automation, and to increase collaboration and knowledge.

Connected and automated vehicle trials should give particular focus to citizens that presently have limited mobility options such as the elderly, people with disability, and those living in remote areas.

Recommendation

Provide funding to actively promote consumer trials of autonomous vehicles in specific urban locations (sandboxing and road network testing).

Discovery

VisitCanberra

Travel between Canberra and the surrounding regions for business and leisure offers the Territory an opportunity to capitalise on the economic benefits of tourism. The recent MoU with the NSW Government to strengthen trade and tourism linkages with the Territory could further facilitate travel to the Capital.

The tourism industry employs 16,800 people and contributes \$2.3 billion to Gross Territory Product (GTP)¹⁵. International services to Canberra Airport offer further opportunities to capitalise on growing international visitor markets, particularly from Asia.

The latest visitor surveys for the year ending March 2018 shows strong growth in domestic and international visitor numbers, alongside record breaking international overnight expenditure. The ACT welcomed just under 5 million domestic and international overnight visitors for the period, recording a 15.8 per cent increase in international visitors to 248,000, almost double the national average.

Domestic overnight and daytrips also increased faster than Australia-wide growth with 2.69 million domestic overnight and two million domestic day visitors for the Year Ending March 2018.¹⁶ The NRMA's own *Are We There Yet?* tourism paper highlights significant growth in international drive visitation.

VisitCanberra, the Territory's tourism marketing agency, has a vital role in encouraging increased visitation, spend and dispersal in and around the Capital. VisitCanberra requires certainty of funding to develop campaigns and major events that continue to attract leisure visitors to the Territory.

The NRMA commends funding allocated to existing major events and the Major Event Fund to grow, expand and enhance the Territory's major event calendar. The NRMA believes further funds should be allocated to boost major event acquisition and development in the Territory, including support for strategic partnerships with the Capital's leading cultural institutions to attract large-scale international events.

Recommendation

Maintain funding commitments for VisitCanberra in real terms in the 2019-20 and forward estimates.

Boost funding for major event development and acquisition, including partnerships with the Capital's cultural institutions.

¹⁵ Visit Canberra (2018) Tourism in the ACT, Year Ending March 2018

¹⁶ Visit Canberra (2018) Tourism in the ACT, Year Ending March 2018

Stromlo Forest Park

Stromlo Forest Park has developed into a burgeoning recreational sporting hub for students, mountain bike enthusiasts, hikers and equestrian riders. In the past year, the Park attracted over 167,000 visitors and is experiencing on average a 15 per cent annual growth in visitor numbers.

The NRMA supports the vision outlined in the Stromlo Forest Park Masterplan in creating a world-class facility for events, tourism and adventure-based activities.

The organisation agrees the park would benefit from the development of on-site tourist accommodation to meet the needs of student groups and burgeoning mountain bike interest groups, and better support large groups visiting the park for events.

Further, the caravan and camping market represents a significant opportunity to grow the territory's leisure market, recognising the sector has become the fastest growing domestic accommodation type in Australia¹⁷. Both the NSW and ACT have the fastest growing number of campervan and caravan registrations, both growing at around 5.9 per cent respectively¹⁸.

However, the current lack of basic utilities at the site makes it a less attractive investment opportunity. Providing basic water, electricity and sewerage to the site is likely to incentivise development.

Recommendation

Fund utility work at Stromlo Forest Park to incentivise tourism development at this site, including stop-over caravan and camping opportunities.

¹⁷ Caravan Industry Association of Australia (2017) *Towards 2030: A connected future*, p7

¹⁸ BDO (2015) *Caravan and campervan data report 2016*, Released October 2016.

Community

Faster Rail – Sydney to Canberra

The NRMA welcomed the late 2017 announcement made by ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr and NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro to commit to improve cross border transport links¹⁹.

The ACT Government has also committed to spend \$5 million in matched funding for the development of a detailed business case to prioritise upgrades to the current rail service²⁰.

A faster train service between Sydney and Canberra would open up significant opportunities to enhance economic development along this corridor and the Capital Region.

With an estimated 20,000 daily traffic movements from NSW into the ACT, it is timely that an investigation of transport planning strategies that support cross-border travel is undertaken to provide future transport options for the region.

A faster rail plan between Sydney and Canberra needs to be fully evaluated. Quicker journey times offers substantial regional economic benefits for local industry and tourism to develop and grow.

The NRMA would support the initiative of both the NSW and ACT Governments to progress this transport option.

Recommendation

Further investigate the feasibility of faster rail between Canberra & Sydney in conjunction with the NSW Government.

Infrastructure transport plan

The ACT Government must plan and fund transport solutions for an ageing population. Australia is expected to see exponential growth in the number of Australians aged 65 and over, rising from around 2.5 million in 2002 to 6.2 million by 2042. For Australians aged 85 and over, the growth is even more rapid, from around 300,000 in 2002 to 1.1 million by 2042²¹. An aging population will present a unique set of mobility challenges in terms of service design and delivery when providing accessible transport solutions for the elderly.

Expand disability ride share pilot in ACT

The expansion of the sharing economy and online platforms to the disability sector enables disability service providers, primary caregivers and persons with disabilities the opportunity to rent modified transport assets when they are not being used. This service can provide autonomy to hundreds of Australians who current face significant restrictions on their mobility because of a lack of suitable, easy and affordable access to a modified vehicle.

¹⁹ ACT Government and NSW Government Media Release 3 November 2017 Cross border transport a top priority under NSW/ACT MOU

²⁰ ACT Government Media Release 1 August 2018 ACT Government commits to faster rail service between Sydney and Canberra

Cross border transport a top priority under NSW/ACT MOU

²¹ Australian Treasury (2017) Australia's demographic challenges

By utilising expensive resources that are currently idle, pilot programs in South Australia and a single vehicle trial in Sydney with GoGet seek to provide the disability sector with more affordable options and improve service delivery outcomes for disability organisations looking to adapt to the NDIS environment. The CARL platform, currently in trial in South Australia allows for heavily modified vehicles such as vans that are sitting idle 40 per cent of the time to be accessed by different disability providers.

These programs may also deliver additional financial income to individuals who are able to make use of idle resources, as well as allow disability service providers to develop new service offerings and share vehicles.

Recommendation

The ACT Government should fund a pilot program to improve mobility for people living with disabilities.

Molonglo Infrastructure Development

The NRMA understands that the development of Molonglo Valley, including major land releases over the next few years will result in the equivalent of 3,920 new residential dwellings, representing almost 23 per cent of the current indicative land release program²².

This development will generate significant traffic flows which will impact the existing road network. To ensure effective connections and mitigate congestion in the area, there is a need to identify, plan and fund adequate road infrastructure and public transport options. The ACT Government must give due regard to the future transport needs of this region, linking the north-west sector of the ACT with West Belconnen.

Recommendation

Appropriately plan infrastructure and transportation links to Molonglo Valley.

²² ACT Government Australian Capital Territory Indicative Land Release Program 2018-19 to 2021-22, pp11-12.

