

Moving Canberra



Canberra**liberals**

9 October 2008



Moving Canberra

Fixing Canberra's Transport Problems

A Canberra Liberal Government will provide Canberra with a transport system to support its continuing growth and development as a major Australian city. Our comprehensive transport policies are aimed at offering choice, decongesting key gridlocked roads and getting transport solutions in place ahead of increases in commuter demand instead of years after.

For too long, the Stanhope Government's transport policies have been reactionary, short sighted and poorly delivered. Projects have been delayed and disrupted, and year after year this government has underspent on the capital works budget until the city has become choked with half finished projects. There is no better example of that than the Gungahlin Drive Extension.

The Canberra Liberals' Transport Policy is a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan for the future, from bicycles to road transport to bus services.

Most importantly, we will work hand in glove with a new independent Infrastructure Commissioner to prioritise the areas in greatest need of investment.

Our key commitments on Transport Policy feature:

- Duplicating the GDE in two and half years from the Barton Highway to Glenloch Interchange (\$93.5 million).
- Widening Parkes Way to accommodate traffic flows from Gungahlin Drive and to handle anticipated future traffic growth from the Molonglo development (\$20 million).
- Extending the long overdue Tharwa Drive duplication (\$3 million).
- A complete Park 'n' Ride program to encourage greater public transport use around four new locations. The new Park 'n' Ride hubs are supported by extra car parks and bike lockers.
- Traffic calming measures in a number of locations around Canberra.
- \$7 million for cycling including the work to complete missing links in the cyclepath network.
- An extra \$2.9 million for the extra bus services and more frequent services.
- A commitment to keeping up with Car Park demand, rather than squeezing families out of cars.

Most importantly, we will approach transport with a long-term view, taking into consideration where and when services will be needed. We will be encouraging public transport with better systems, not by limiting choice. We will be planning for the future, without sacrificing the present.

Labor's Failing Transport System

It was not long many years ago that Canberrans still rightly and proudly boasted that had the best roads in the country. Indeed the NRMA has suggested that in 2001 when Labor came to office, it inherited a good road network (*Canberra Times* 17 December 2006).

Gungahlin Drive

Jon Stanhope Government promised a four lane road in the 2001 election, but after he got elected he downsized the planned road to two lanes. The Stanhope Government ignored studies from its own road experts in 2002 which warned that four lanes would be needed. In 2008 the Stanhope Government has rehashed its broken promise to duplicate the road. Now the Government claims that they will finish the job in the year 2011, over a decade behind schedule. Under this government, the road is being built at a rate of under one kilometre a year!

Parkes Way

The Stanhope Government has done nothing to improve the east-west traffic flow along Parkes Way, even though the Glenloch Interchange is now channelling increased volumes of traffic onto Parkes Way at peak hours.

Airport Roads (Pialligo)

Trips between the city and the airport used to take around eight minutes. Today under the Stanhope Government, traffic is gridlocked around the approaches to the Majura Interchange.

This traffic mess was foreseeable years ago. Eight years ago, in the year 2000 Budget, the last Liberal Government provided funds to duplicate Pialligo Avenue from the Airport all the way to the city (Budget Paper 3, p. 126). Jon Stanhope inherited the project. The Stanhope Government then deferred the project in four successive budgets (2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06). Then the Stanhope Government made the remarkable decision to cancel the money for roadworks between the Airport and the City.

Now, on the eve of an election, roadworks have commenced – long after the problems emerged.

Monaro Highway

At several points along the Monaro Highway there are choke points that the Stanhope Government is refusing to fix. Roads that were adequate ten years ago have gradually deteriorated in their ability to handle rising traffic volumes, but Labor has taken no action to respond to the needs.

Cyclepaths

Canberra's network of off-road cyclepaths have been allowed to deteriorate, despite the recent increases in commuter cycling. People will not be attracted to a network that is un-signposted and riddled with decaying dangerspots. The Stanhope Government has received three reports which identify a total of 46 potential projects that are needed, but by this year only one of these projects has been completed.

Tharwa Bridge

Tharwa Bridge is a serious example of how the Stanhope Government has treated the community shabbily and kept people in the dark over when works could ever start or how long they could take. The Tharwa bridge was closed in September 2006, then the Stanhope Government later relented and agreed to conduct repairs, but only to a level that would support light traffic. The Government's latest story is that final works will not finish until 2012 – four years away. The Tharwa community has suffered both a school closure and a bridge closure in a double act of meanness.

Buses

In 2006 the Stanhope Government compounded the shortcomings in our public transport system by making extensive cuts to the ACTION bus routes and services. The Transport Workers Union, which represents the majority of ACTION staff, rated the ACTION bus network "the worst in 30 years."

According to a recent AAMI study, Canberra has one of the lowest capital city public transport patronage levels in the country. Only 7% of Canberrans use the bus service for their regular travel to schools and work. This compares with usage rates of up to 19 to 20% interstate.

Safety on Buses and at Interchanges

The safety of passengers and ACTION staff has been at growing risk in recent years. This shows in the figures for assaults on ACTION drivers which have increased from 9 in 2004-05 to 16 in 2006-07. Security levels at ACTION bus interchanges is an issue for many passengers and this is exacerbated by interchange design and siting which are not conducive to public supervision and security monitoring.

Disability Access

The inadequate number of replacement buses purchased in recent years has put at risk the achievement of the accessible vehicle target imposed by the Disability Discrimination Act. Barely 100 buses from a fleet of 377 meet accessibility standards that have been mandatory for 16 years.



Light Rail

The recent announcement of a study into light rail was a belated decision and the Stanhope Government's commitment is entirely conditional upon the availability of Commonwealth government funding before it proceeds.

Car Parking

By the end of 2007 three Commonwealth Departments had made decisions to relocate their staff to new buildings in City West. Those buildings were constructed on former surface car parks which were redeveloped over several years between sale of the land and occupied building stage. In recent years the Stanhope Government made insufficient allowance for the parking needs of thousands of new office and retail staff who have been added to the City workforce in recent years.

The Property Council says that a new report shows that the ACT has a current shortage of 10,000 public car parking spaces in the main shopping and business precinct of Civic and that this could blow out to a deficit of 20,000 over the next 10 years (*ABC Online* 30 April 2007). The ACT Chamber of Commerce has said that the worsening shortage of car parks is having a double impact on retailers, as they have been losing customers for years due to the parking shortage and now staff are threatening to leave as well (*Canberra Times* 25 Feb 2008).

The Liberal Plan to Make our Transport System Work

At the centre of our long-term vision are plans to upgrade and connect our key arterial roads, so that they form a seamless Western Parkway, a seamless Eastern Parkway and a more effective Central Parkway, so that Canberrans have the option of efficiently commuting across most of the length and breadth of our city without encountering traffic lights or traffic bottlenecks.

- The **Western Parkway** will be a four lane road starting with Tuggeranong Parkway in the south, flowing along Caswell Drive and Gungahlin Drive Extension. The final works to complete the Parkway will be carried out during our first term of government when we duplicate Gungahlin Drive Extension.
- The **Eastern Parkway** will be a four lane road joining Monaro Highway in the south, to Majura Road and then to Horse Park Drive in the north. During our first term of government the new Infrastructure Commissioner will identify priorities for future major works on this road.
- The **Central Parkway** will extend from William Hovell Drive in the East (from the Drake Brockman Drive intersection) through to Parkes Way, then to Morshead Drive and finally to Pialligo Avenue in the east, travelling past the airport and out towards Queanbeyan. The western end of this road is of increasing importance in the longer term as greenfields housing development is planned in the Molonglo area (near Weston Creek).

Our vision to improve traffic flows along these three free-flowing corridors will give coherence and functionality to Canberra's road network.

Gungahlin Drive

The Canberra Liberals are the only party with a fully-costed plan that puts enough funding on the table to upgrade Gungahlin Drive to a four lane road along its full length. All year the Stanhope Government has rubbished calls for duplication of the road, only to perform an about face after the Canberra Liberals pledged on 21 July to fix the road.

The Canberra Liberals will finish the duplication of Gungahlin Drive as an urgent priority within our first term. We will upgrade this road to a four lane Parkway in just half the time that Labor took to build a two lane road.

- A Canberra Liberal Government will spend \$93.5 million to finish the duplication of GDE. Labor now say they will spend only \$85 million, less than is needed to finish the job. They are likely to face more blowouts!
- We will do this job in two years, not four years as now planned by the Stanhope Government.
- We will also spend \$1.5 million to plant vegetation alongside the road to upgrade it, from a Freeway, to a Parkway that is scenic for motorists and screens the road from neighbouring areas.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
GDE Duplication from Barton Highway to Glenloch Interchange	13,500	55,000	25,000	
Parkway Vegetation		500	1,000	

Parkes Way

A Canberra Liberal Government will invest in the widening of Parkes Way along sections between the Glenloch Interchange to near the Clunies Ross Street intersection, to cope with current and future traffic flows from Gungahlin Drive Extension. This is a top Canberra Liberal priority.

The single lane Gungahlin Drive is already at capacity and some potential users of the road are being deterred by the slow pace of existing traffic in peak hours. Even under current conditions, the traffic flow from Gungahlin Drive is causing knock-on effects on Parkes Way as several lanes merge together. The situation on Parkes Way will only get worse as Gungahlin's population grows and as future housing developments open up in the Molonglo area (north of Weston Creek).

Canberra needs to have adequate road systems in place before we start building new town centres. A Canberra Liberal Government will plan and construct the Parkes Way duplication between Glenloch Interchange and Clunies Ross Street in our first term.

The Parkes Way works will commence in 2010 for completion in 2011. These important works will ensure that when Gungahlin Drive is fully duplicated, there is capacity on Parkes Way to accommodate the additional traffic that will funnel down the Western Parkway.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Parkes Way Widening between Glenloch and Clunies Ross Street	0	0	15,000	5,000

Tharwa Drive to Drakeford Drive

A further \$3 million will be committed to duplication of Tharwa Drive and Drakeford Drive north of Box Hill Avenue, to improve the movement of traffic in and out of the Lanyon Valley. This work will take over when Stage 1 of the duplication works end in mid 2012. Further amounts will be provided in subsequent years, on the eastern leg of Tharwa Drive.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Tharwa Drive Duplication Stage 2				3,000

Tharwa Bridge

A Canberra Liberal Government will bring forward the funding to complete Tharwa Bridge and accelerate the works to restore the Bridge's load carrying capacity to original design levels as soon as possible.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Draw forward of Tharwa Bridge restoration funds	1,200	3,500		
Reduction of original funding provision in the out years			-3,000	-1,700

Duplication of Erindale Drive between Ashley Drive and Sternberg Crescent

We will duplicate a key stretch of Erindale Drive between Ashley Drive and Sternberg Crescent, which is choked at peak periods by merging of traffic from southern Tuggeranong and from northern and central parts of Tuggeranong.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Duplication of Erindale Drive between Ashley Drive and Sternberg Crescent		1,000	2,000	

Roadside Drug Testing

Roadside drug testing will be introduced in accordance with the successful Victorian model to make our roads safer places for responsible drivers.

Bus Interchanges

The Canberra Liberals support efforts to replace the cold, unsafe bus interchange designs of the 1970s with modern enclosed bus lounges that are integrated with major urban retail spaces and face towards on-street bus stops. The Canberra Liberals will honour the arrangement entered into with Westfield for the redevelopment of the Belconnen interchange.

We will seek expressions of interest from a range of retail and housing developers, to identify opportunities to extend the Belconnen solution to other key interchanges. New modern bus stations will be built at the cost to developers and to standards set by the ACT Government. The cost carried by developers will be deducted from the proceeds of sale of land adjoining existing town centres. Valuation of the land sales and the construction costs for new interchanges will be open and transparent.

We will continue negotiations with Westfield for a deal on Woden towncentre and we will open discussions with interested parties about replacement of the Tuggeranong interchange.

Bus Fleet and Routes

A Canberra Liberal Government will be fully committed to continuing a large scale bus replacement program to modernise ACTION's ageing bus fleet, improve environmental standards and meet legal obligations to make public transport accessible. The program for renewal of the bus fleet will continue beyond the end of 2011-12 when Labor's funding terminates.

We are strongly committed to delivering the funding provided in the 2008 budget. A Canberra Liberal Government will go further to restore some important peak hour ACTION bus routes with an allocation of \$2.9 million over four years. We will put back services to meet demand in some of the areas which the Stanhope Government decided were not priorities in its Network 08 changes recently introduced.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Procurement of 100 new buses over four years (continuation of budget 2008)	6,000	15,500	15,500	12,500
Network 08 Implementation (2 nd appropriation and budget 2008 funding)	8,550	8,670	8,800	8,930
Canberra Liberal funding increase to support New Bus Services	400	750	750	1000

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming measures have been effectively employed in many neighbourhood precincts and particularly around schools and shopping centres. A Canberra Liberal Government will provide improved funding for speed humps, chicanes and roundabouts where there is evidence that they are needed. Changes will be introduced in consultation with local residents, to address local speeding problems.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Traffic calming measures		2,000	2,000	2,000

Dragway

A Canberra Liberal Government will provide a further \$2 million in new funds additional to \$8 million already allocated in the Motorsports Trust, for a total capped public contribution of \$10 million towards a dragway facility.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Dragway additional funding	2,000			

Interchange CCTV

Initiatives to improve the safety of passengers and ACTION staff will be pursued to build on the safer environment afforded by the new interchanges. Closed circuit television will be installed on all buses and in appropriate public locations to maintain a security watch over passengers and staff. We will enhance the existing program for CCTV rollout.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
CCTV Rollout - Capital	350			
CCTV Depreciation		70	70	70
CCTV Expenses	20	76	78	80

Park 'n' Ride

The Canberra Liberals will fund Park 'n' Ride at four new locations in Tuggeranong, Weston Creek, Gungahlin and North Canberra. We will also scrap the Stanhope Government plans to install pay parking metres at Mawson, which will inhibit and limit the potential for Park 'n' Ride commuting.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Stop pay parking at Mawson car parks	0	100	193	193
Expansion of Park 'n' Ride to Tuggeranong, Weston Creek, Gungahlin and North Canberra	0	900	800	300

Parking

The Canberra Liberals recognise that parking in the City and some town centres is becoming unacceptably tight.

As a government we will be responsible in ensuring that we keep up with demand. Where new developments are approved, we will required increased parking. Our aim is to increase parking in the City over time, especially close to the city centre where commuters can connect to key public transport systems. We will not gratuitously take away parking as the Stanhope Government has done, at a time when the demand for parks is on the increase.

We believe that the solution to parking pressures lies in an integrated approach including enhanced public transport services, increased options for park and ride commuting and increased private provision of parking and transport options.

Five Year Plan

The Canberra Liberals will re-establish a five year road funding plan, to identify long-term needs and priorities and to obtain value for money from road construction contracts. We reject the Stanhope Government's year-to-year approach to road funding, which entails uncertainty for motorists and for industry.

We have set out the centrepieces of our five year plan in this visionary road transport policy, based on areas of greatest congestion pressure. Other roads will also be factored into our five year plan, based on expert advice and modelling in order of priority.

The Canberra Liberals have announced plans for an Infrastructure Commissioner who will give independent and open advice on top infrastructure needs.

- We will ask that the Commissioner scrutinise the adequacy of current plans to fix the main blockage point around the airport roads. The Stanhope Government has belatedly agreed to fund some east-west road works, but has failed to put funding on the table to commence the related works on the intersecting north-south roads. The Federal Government has offered \$30 million to connect Monaro Highway with Majura Road as a duplicated project, but the local ACT Labor government has failed to foot up the remaining funds.
- The Commissioner will also consider congestion on the Monaro Highway including at the intersections with Isabella Drive and Mugga Lane. The Commissioner will also consider the pressure on the single lane section of Monaro Highway near Fyshwick, between Canberra Avenue and Newcastle Street.
- Other examples of roads that will be assessed for inclusion in the first five year plan include Johnson Drive, Isabella Drive and Athllon Drive in the south, Gundaroo Drive and Flemington Road in the north, and Fairbairn Avenue, Clunies Ross Street and Cotter Road in the centre.

We will align our five year plans with the Commonwealth Government's five year timeframes for its road funding agreements with the states. This will strengthen the ACT's ability to enter joint partnerships with the Commonwealth, because the Territory will be in a position to offer long term co-contributions in return for Commonwealth funding.

Cyclepaths

The Canberra Liberals have already announced funding of over \$7.1 million to expand and enhance the cyclepaths network. This includes \$5.4 million in capital funding and \$1.7 million in maintenance. We recognise the contribution that cycling makes to improving health outcomes, reducing road congestion and cutting emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases by taking cars off the roads.

We will signpost the network, provide additional bike lockers at Park 'n' Ride hubs, fix the maintenance backlog and commence a program to complete the missing links in the network. Pedal Power have observed that:

“The most important difference that emerged was the Liberal Party is prepared to fund future investment in cycling (see above) while Labor was prepared to stand on its record.” (*Pedal Power Bulletin* 8 October 2008)

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Bike path signposting	400	500		
Planning and Completing Missing Links in the Cyclepaths Network			2,000	2,000
Capital upgrade stage 1		400		
Bike lockers for park-and-ride	120			
Recurrent - Maintenance backlog	1200	500		

Taxis

The Canberra Liberals commit to the establishment of consultative approach to the taxi industry. An appropriate communication and advisory forum will be created to ensure that industry has an opportunity to have its voice heard on taxi planning and operational issues.

The taxi industry will be urgently reviewed with a view to providing a more reliable service and a more viable local industry. An independent transport specialist will be engaged to work in conjunction with industry and the community. The terms of reference will include needs and supply analysis, fare structure, vehicle options, service support mechanisms and industry standards. The proposed allocation of additional plates will be suspended until the results of the study are available.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Taxi Review by Transport Specialist	75	75		
Taxi – Consultation Forum	12	30	31	32