



Getting Light Rail On Track

Canberra**liberals**

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Labor's Approach to Light Rail

Jon Stanhope has been to two elections before promising nothing more than a study on light rail. Now for a third time he is recycling a stale old promise with no intention of ever going ahead with light rail.

Jon Stanhope Labor on Light Rail in 2001...

"We will conduct a feasibility study into light rail and conduct public consultation on the findings..."

Jon Stanhope Labor on Light Rail in 2008...

"I am extremely pleased to be able to announce that the ACT Government is moving ahead with its exploration of light rail..."

Seven years have gone by and Stanhope Labor has managed to write a letter to the Commonwealth asking them to pick up the tab and set aside \$200,000 for a study. This compares with the \$3.5 million they spent on examining the case for a busway that was never going to be built. These are not the actions of a Government that is serious or genuine about light rail becoming a reality in the ACT.

The Stanhope Government has wasted seven years without consulting the community or making the necessary investment to progress light rail options. They have not identified:

- where the routes would go, which town centres would be connected and how many stops there would be along routes;
- what engineering works would be required and what their costs are likely to be;
- where new land reservations are required for terminals and other associated infrastructure;
- what the costs would be, to transport users or to the taxpayer for a light rail system;
- what flow-on impacts light rail would have for the bus network;
- what public demand there is and how much people are prepared to pay;
- what the timeframe would be to construct a light rail network and how different sections of the network would phase into operation; or
- what savings could be achieved by avoiding a need for new roads in growth areas.

These are all questions that need answers and a Canberra Liberal Government will not waste time in getting the research done to provide these answers to the Canberra community.

The Stanhope Government's only contribution to future transport options was to waste millions of dollars on bus lanes that don't exist and spend money purchasing more old fashioned diesel-fuelled buses.

Stanhope Labor have no credibility on light rail commitments and have constantly ignored the future transport needs of Canberra.

Time to Take Light Rail Seriously

The Canberra Liberals are seriously committed to addressing Canberra's future transport needs and assessing the adoption of light rail in the Territory. The community are crying out for vision and for something to be done on this issue - the Canberra Liberals will take substantial action and not wait seven years and issue empty promises.

Designing a Complete Light Rail System

A Canberra Liberal Government will **commit \$8 million dollars** to move the Australian Capital Territory closer to a rapid public transport system in the ACT – a measure crucially important for the sustainability of the city.

- We will spend \$4 million dollars on an **engineering study of light rail routes and integrated terminals for rail and bus connections**. We will find out how much this project will cost and where the terminals will go and what engineering work is required.
- We will spend \$1 million dollars for **urban and commercial planning to rezone and set aside the land required** along major transport corridors. We will need not only land reservations for track, but also for terminals and other supporting infrastructure.
- Finally we will commission a **transport user census**, to tell us how much people are prepared to pay, what routes they want and at what times, and how often they would travel on an integrated light rail and bus services. This comprehensive census will cost \$3 million and will provide a detailed picture of the community wants and needs.

If the case stacks up, we will take a fully costed proposal to the electorate prior to the next election in 2012, to let the Canberra public make a fully informed choice on this very significant undertaking.

The Canberra public should be fully informed on a range of factors such as what light rail would cost, how much it can cut travel times and de-congest roads, and what the contribution would be to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We will commit \$8 million over four years to the feasibility studies and forward design of a light rail system for Canberra.

The engineering feasibility study will commence first, to provide the foundation stone for this important planning work. The transport user census will be based on findings from the engineering study regarding routes, travel times, cost and other factors which impact upon transport users. The information from the census would subsequently be fed back into the engineering study, to produce a final picture on the strength of demand and the routes which would be the highest priority in the rollout of a light rail system.

The planning studies and zoning changes will be the final part of the planning exercise. Regardless of whether a light rail system proceeds towards construction in late 2012 or is deferred to a later year, a Canberra Liberal Government will preserve key sections of land that have been identified for the system. As Canberra grows, light rail will become increasingly viable and it will be preferable that all land required for the project is ready and available.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Engineering Feasibility and Forward Design Study	200	2,000	1,800	
Planning Forward Design			500	500
Transport User Census component of Feasibility Study		3,000		

Co-Ordination Between Government

The Canberra Liberals would expect the Federal Government to contribute significantly to making light rail a reality in the ACT.

However, in order to attract federal support, the ACT Government must present a comprehensive and credible case that demonstrates that sustainable capacity and demand exists. If the ACT Government is not prepared to show a willingness to invest in serious studies, then it cannot expect the Federal Government to fund this proposal ahead of other more polished proposals from other states.

Given the lack of credible planning work done by the Stanhope Government, it will be difficult to secure Federal Government support in the near future. It is realistic to expect that the ACT Government will need to apply for Federal funding in successive infrastructure funding rounds.

The Canberra Liberals are serious about improving the sustainability of our transport system and we will prepare and present a comprehensive assessment of light rail to