



ACT Government

2002-2003 BUDGET

ACT BUDGET ENCOURAGES SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

ACT Minister for Urban Services, Bill Wood, and ACT Minister for Planning, Simon Corbell, have both welcomed the 2002-03 budget that includes a wide range of initiatives aimed at laying the foundations for sustainable transport in the ACT.

In developing the 2002-03 budget, the Government has committed to taking an integrated, strategic, approach to Canberra's transport needs over coming years. The challenges are significant in that they advocate, in a city that has become dependent on the use of cars, greater use of transport modes other than the private car. Transport under Labor will continue to address our sustainability challenges by planning for and delivering the transport needs of all Canberrans, whether it be walking, cycling, public transport or private vehicles.

The budget enables the new transport policy to integrate the Government's social, environmental, land use planning and economic objectives in a single, sustainable framework.

Sustainable transport initiatives are a major theme of the budget. In preparation, the Government has already:

- Commenced the preparation of a strategic transport framework;
- Appointed a transport economist to work with the community to develop a strategic transport policy;
- Set in train a Public Transport Futures Feasibility Study which includes a specific investigation of public transport options for Gungahlin;
- Assessed the current investment in the public transport system; and
- Reviewed pricing policies for car parking, public transport, vehicle registration and related charges to ascertain the optimal structures for sustainable transport."

"Consistent with this commitment, the 2002-03 budget contains a number of forward-looking initiatives to encourage greater use of transport other than private motor vehicles, to help achieve greenhouse gas targets and help cut peak traffic congestion," said Mr Corbell.

ACTION

"ACTION bus fares have been overhauled, and as requested by the Canberra public, we will introduce a simple, flat fare structure. With a budget allocation of \$8.8 million over the next four years, the current multi-zone fare structure will be replaced by one whole of Canberra zone. This means that from 1 July 2002 there will be one fare anywhere in Canberra.



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“The new fare structure will especially benefit people travelling long distances. Passengers who previously paid all-zone fares will now save up to 46% on their bus fares,” said Mr Corbell.

The new ticket price will increase by 4-8% compared with the previous single zone tickets. The pensioner off-peak ticket price will increase from \$1.20 to \$1.30, which continues to represent good value for money. These increases include a Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment approved by the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission.

“This initiative demonstrates the ACT Government’s commitment to public transport and our goal of attracting more Canberrans to use ACTION,” said Mr Corbell.

In a move to make ACTION buses even more efficient and safe, the ACT Government will allocate \$1.5 million to replace the 15-year old bus fleet radio communication system.

“The safety of ACTION’s customers and staff is our number one concern. A modern communications system, including an emergency call facility, is necessary to provide effective operational control of the bus fleet, essential emergency communications to drivers, and assistance and support to passengers,” said Mr Corbell.

Minister Corbell also said that \$17.2 million will be provided over five years to progressively update ACTION’s bus fleet. The buses will contain features that meet the needs of people with disabilities. The new low-floor, accessible buses will be powered by environmentally friendly fuels such as natural gas, which will assist the ACT in meeting its greenhouse gas targets.

“Many of the 17% of Canberrans with a mobility restriction are heavily dependent on public transport, and we want to increase their level of independence by ensuring they can get around Canberra easily and comfortably on public transport,” said Mr Corbell.

Parking

“In an effort to encourage greater use of public transport and establish a fairer parking system across Canberra, pay parking will be introduced in the Belconnen and Tuggeranong town centres in 2003.

“Pay parking already exists in Civic, Dickson, Manuka, Kingston and Woden - this will make parking more equitable across Canberra.

“Agreement in principle has been reached with the National Capital Authority for pay parking to be introduced in the Barton and Forrest office precinct.

“Negotiations will begin to locate an area specifically for parking at Lake Tuggeranong College, the only College in Canberra without on site parking.

“Consistent with this Government’s strategy to encourage Canberrans to choose energy efficient modes of transport, free Park ‘n’ Ride parking spaces will continue to be provided in both Tuggeranong and Belconnen for commuters wishing to catch buses,” said Mr Wood.

Red light and speed cameras

“Drivers who speed and drivers who run red lights pose a safety risk to all Canberrans. In order to enhance the successful red light speed camera road safety initiative, the ACT Government has allocated \$300,000 to allow for processing for the extra six cameras that have just come on line.

“Statistics show that red light and speed cameras have been successful in modifying driver behaviour. This funding will ensure that we continue to maintain and improve upon our enviable safety record,” said Mr Wood.

Vehicle registration fees

From 1 September 2002, annual vehicle registration fees will increase on average by \$26, bringing them in line with NSW fees.

On-road cycling

“Among a range of cycle path construction and upgrades provided for in the new budget is the construction of an on-road cycling path from Woden to Dickson. This path has been identified by cyclists as a key priority in expanding the ACT’s cycle path network.

“We have committed \$2.5 million over two years to this project, with a feasibility study already underway. The on-road path will be constructed between Woden and Dickson,” said Mr Wood.

“This project is part of a wider strategy for improving cycling facilities consistent with the Bicycle 2000 strategy.

“As our population grows and with it our use of motor vehicles, we need to look at ways to achieve sustainable transport in the future, ensuring that our actions today do not negatively impact on our environment tomorrow,” said Mr Wood.

Statement ends 25 June 2002