

SUBMISSION 23

The Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the
National Capital & External Territories
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir

INQUIRY INTO PAY PARKING IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ZONE

I wish to contribute to the above inquiry. I support the introduction of pay parking on the grounds that such a move, when combined with enhanced provision of public transport services, would allow the Parliamentary Zone to become a more accessible, lively and sustainable place for all Australians.

My submission takes the form of the research project I completed as part of a Master of Planning Degree at the University of Technology Sydney in 2000. Titled, *Capital Transit – a proposal to enhance access to the central national area of the National Capital*, the project sought to address three key objectives:

- To provide enhanced transit-oriented mobility around the Central National Area for both visitors and workers;
- To promote ecologically sustainable development through reduced car dependence and greenhouse gas emissions; and
- To facilitate the realisation of the 'place of the people' concept with more activity and urbanity within the Parliamentary Zone.

In particular I would draw the Committee's attention to Part 2, Context, which reviews the various policies influencing access; Part 3, which examines the demand for transport services to the area; and Part 6 which recommends a new transit service catering for both visitors and commuters.

My research reviewed the *Parliamentary Zone Review Outcome Report* recommendations concerning pay parking and a contained shuttle bus system. It noted that paid parking may offer a useful mechanism to manage demand and raise revenue but to achieve the objectives outlined above, a more holistic approach focussing on a high quality alternative transport system serving a larger catchment and directly linked with Civic would be required.

I have attached one hard copy of *Capital Transit – a proposal to enhance access to the central national area of the National Capital* and an electronic version (zip disk format).

Finally, I wish to acknowledge that, as a Commonwealth officer, my research was completed while an employee of the National Capital Authority (NCA), but the views put forward are my own and do not necessarily represent those of the NCA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauder', with a large, sweeping flourish at the beginning.

John Lauder

7 March 2003

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

MASTER OF PLANNING

GRADUATE PROJECT

2000

CAPITAL TRANSIT

***A PROPOSAL TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO THE
CENTRAL NATIONAL AREA OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL***

BY

I D (JOHN) LAUDER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the support and assistance provided by my employer, the National Capital Authority, in undertaking this Graduate Project. The stimulating professional environment and access to its unsurpassed research collection, proved invaluable in bringing this project to fruition.

I also note here that any opinions expressed in this project are those of the author alone and should not be considered to represent those of the National Capital Authority.

Thanks to all those colleagues who have contributed to my greater understanding of planning, environmental and transport issues facing the National Capital. I am particularly grateful to Yvonne Wigman and the Library team for their help in locating some of the more elusive references. Special thanks are also due to Adam Azzopardi and Andre Simpson for their assistance in adapting the Authority's 3D model and GIS technology to produce some of the project's graphics.

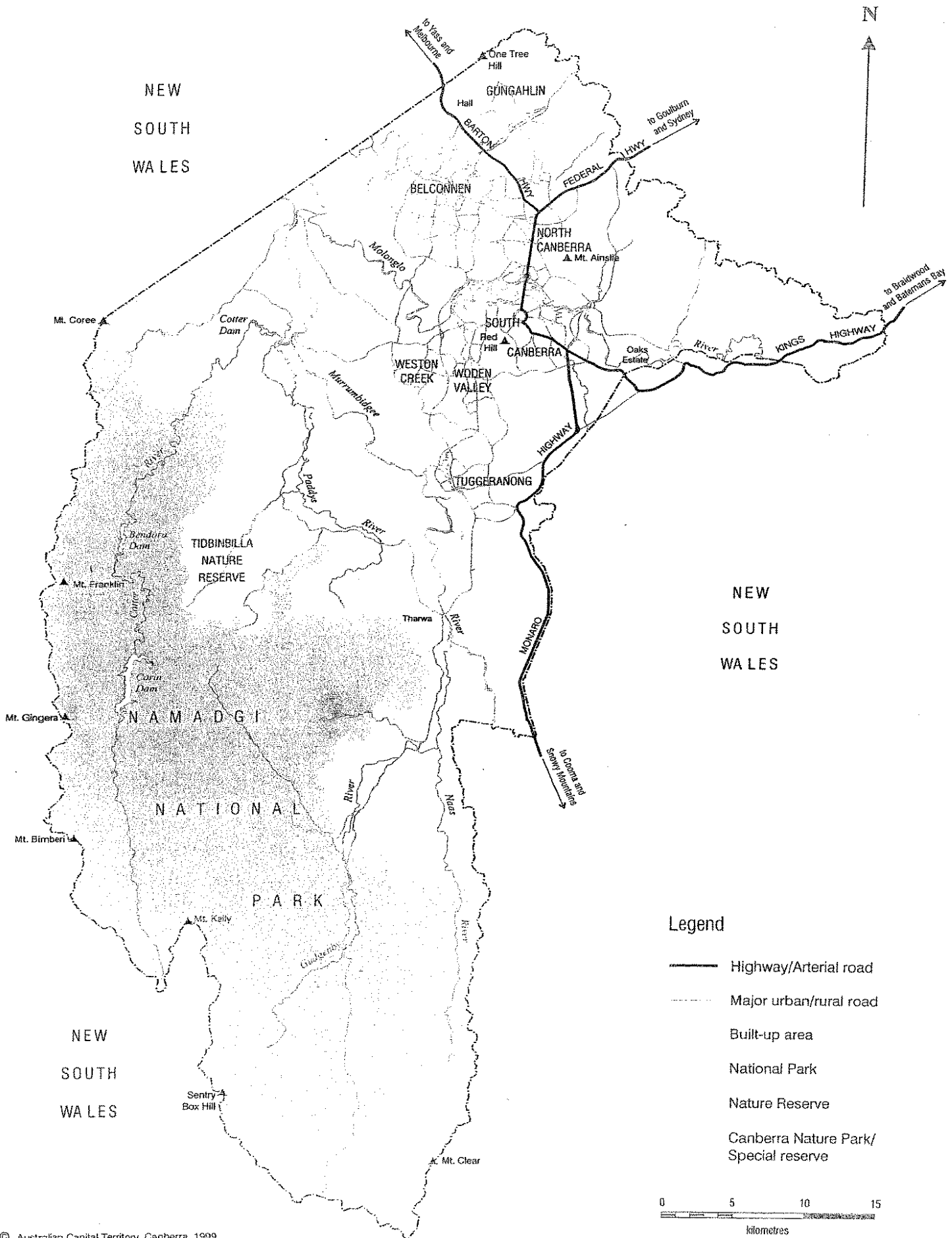
To all my course colleagues in Cohort '97, especially Ted Collins and Alan Franklin, many thanks for your support, motivation and friendship. Thanks also to the course Director and my project supervisor, Dr Glen Searle.



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AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



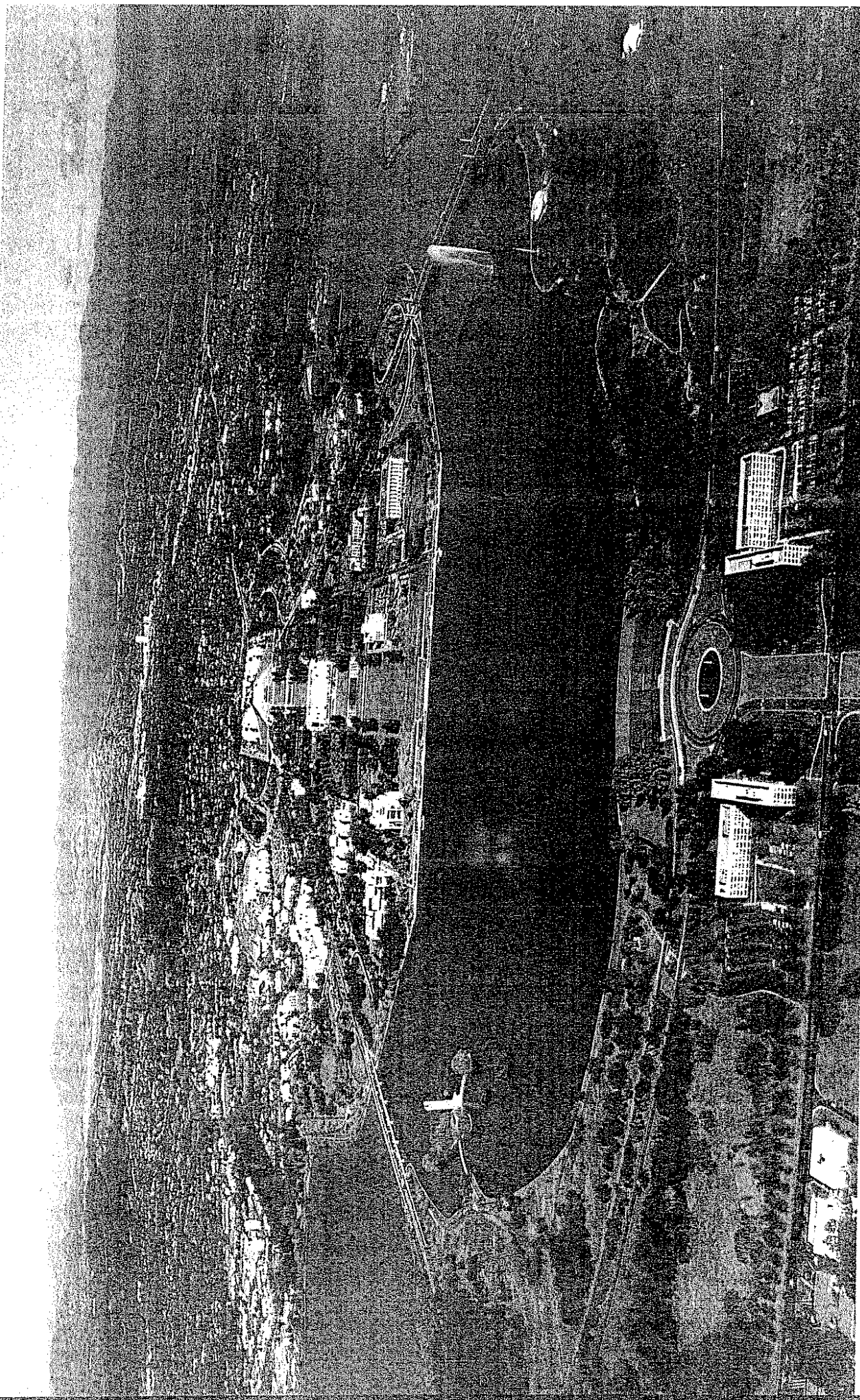


Image source - National Capital Authority

Canberra ACT - Aerial view looking south over the study area

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.2 Project Objectives

1.3 Project Structure

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Canberra, unlike other Australian cities serves a dual purpose. It is first and foremost the National Capital, but it is also Australia's largest inland city serving a regional hinterland with over 350,000 residents.

Canberra was planned from its inception to be Australia's National Capital. Designed in the early Twentieth Century by Walter Burley Griffin, the city blends its natural setting of mountains and river valley with the formal elements of a geometric centre based on a large, symbolic triangle and an artificial lake. (Griffin's Plan for Canberra is shown at Figure 1.1) These places and all the surrounding areas of significance are now known collectively as the Central National Area (CNA) and are acknowledged as integral to the setting of the National Capital. Figure 1.2 illustrates the key features of central Canberra today.

True to Griffin's plan, the southern apex of the National Triangle, known as the Parliamentary Zone, is the symbolic heart of Australian nationhood. It is the seat of government and the location for many of the institutions which represent and symbolise the Australian people, their values and achievements.

The National Capital of 25,000 people as envisaged by Griffin in 1911, has grown to become Australia's largest inland city with some 310,000 residents. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000b, p 39) Its important civic functions combined with the magnificent natural and built heritage form a drawcard which attracts over four million visitors to Canberra annually. (Canberra Tourism and Events Corporation, 2000)

In recent years, however, one of the central design elements of Griffin's vision - that of creating a city that embodied the Australian democratic ideals of equity and fairness, has been eroded through the loss of good public transport access to the central areas. Ironically, this diminished access may primarily be attributed to the ever increasing use of that universal symbol of modern mobility and 'freedom' - the private vehicle.

As the preferred mode of transport for both residents and visitors to Canberra, cars, along with the arterial roads and car parks serving them, now dominate the city's landscape, no more so than in the CNA. The Lake is severed from the city centre by the freeway-like Parkes Way; the Parliamentary Zone is land locked by six lane highways and Parliament House is itself encircled by moats of fast flowing traffic. The Australian Capital Territory now has the dubious distinction of having the highest level of car use in the nation with each of its registered vehicles travelling an average distance of some 16,100 kilometres annually. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000a)

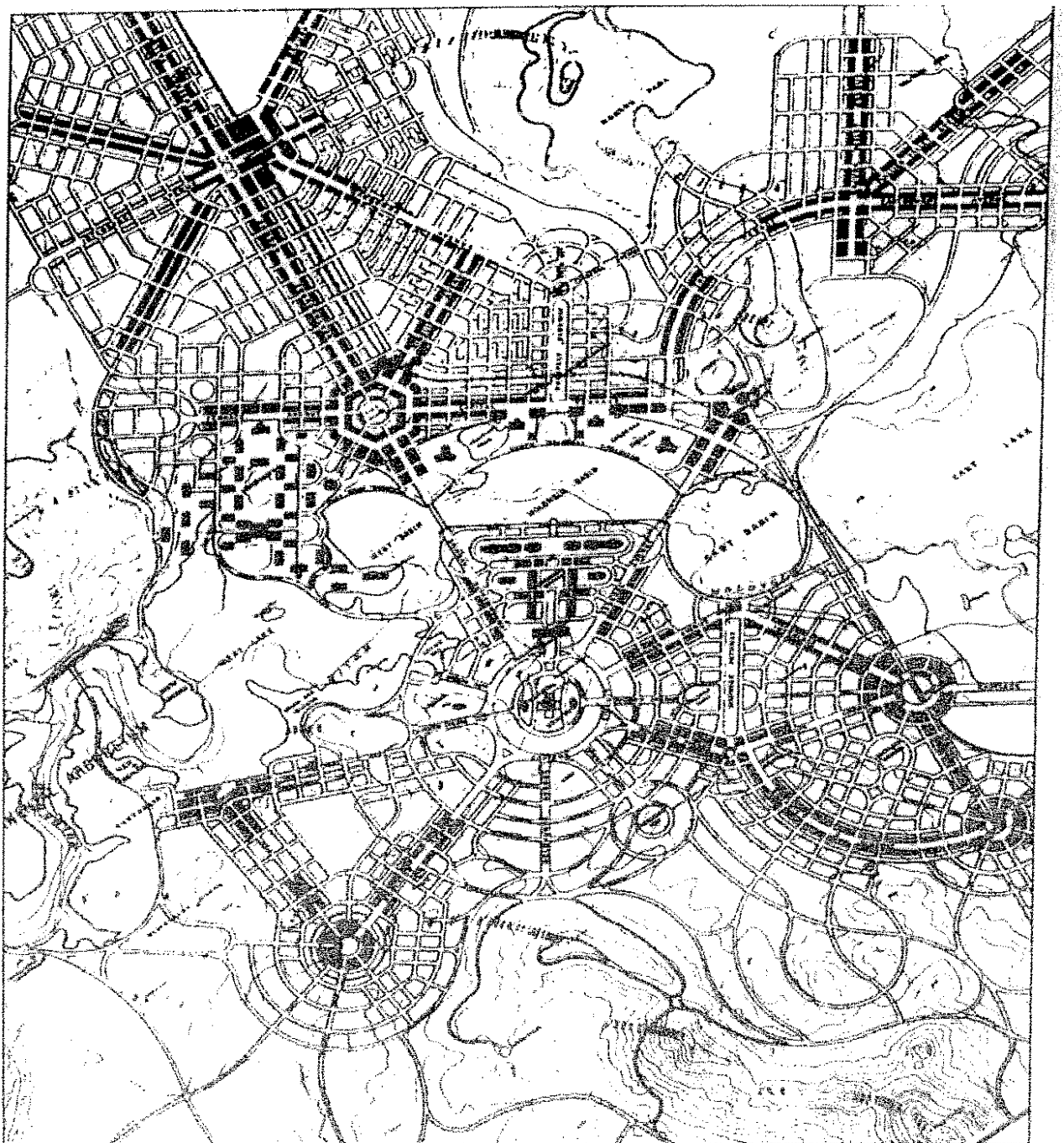
The failure by successive administrations to develop policies supportive of a more balanced approach to managing the transport needs of the city has resulted in a collapse in demand for public transport services, including privately operated tourist coaches, and subsequent reductions in services. These cuts have directly affected services to the national institutions and associated attractions on which the city's tourism industry is based and have undermined commuter patronage to key employment nodes.

With more 'blockbuster' tourist drawcards such as the new Museum of Australia at Acton Peninsular and the prospect of a range of significant new visitor-generating initiatives, such as Commonwealth Place, Reconciliation Place and a National Aerospace Centre in the Parliamentary Zone itself (National Capital Authority, 2000a), access issues are likely to become acute across the CNA.

As sustainable transport options become fewer the resulting increased volumes of traffic will add to congestion, overspill parking, and safety problems for pedestrians and cyclists. In the absence of a determined effort to effect a significant shift away from car dependency through the implementation of alternative movement systems, the 'bush capital' faces the real prospect of reduced visitor appeal and unacceptable greenhouse gas emissions.

The prime objective of this project is to develop an enhanced public transit strategy which will go some way to restoring Griffin's vision for a city which symbolised its democratic role through landscapes and national institutions that are open and accessible to all.

Figure 1.1 Walter Burley Griffin Plan for Canberra - 1925



Source: Reproduced in National Capital Authority (2000a) p 74

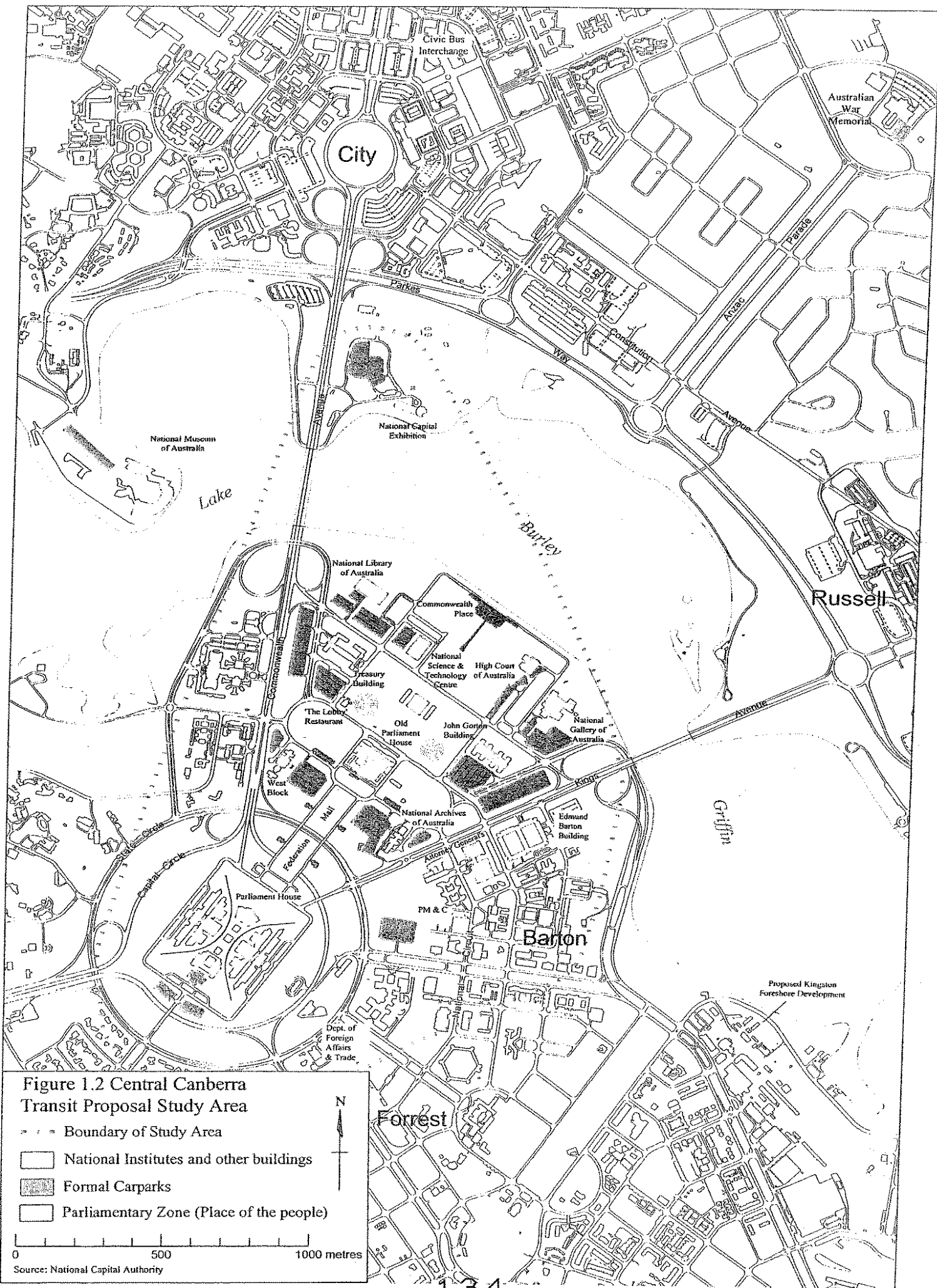


Figure 1.2 Central Canberra
Transit Proposal Study Area

- - - Boundary of Study Area
- National Institutes and other buildings
- Formal Carparks
- Parliamentary Zone (Place of the people)

0 500 1000 metres

Source: National Capital Authority

The project acknowledges that changes to jurisdictional responsibilities for the city's management brought on by the introduction of ACT self government in 1989, has resulted in the Territory Government pursuing an agenda which does not necessarily accord priority to recognising Canberra's function as the National Capital (Wright, 1998). While it is clear that the Commonwealth retains responsibility for planning and developing the 'National Capital' elements of the city, it is reliant on the Territory to provide important ancillary functions, such as good public transport access.

As Territory Government policy and budgetary constraints are unlikely to result in any significant commitment toward upgrading of public transport services in the immediate future, the Commonwealth should demonstrate leadership. Such a move would be consistent with the findings of the recent Parliamentary Zone Review (National Capital Authority, 2000a) as well as Commonwealth environment policies promoting ecologically sustainable development and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The project will canvass policies and practices which underpin successful public transport operations and provide case studies of a number of innovative Australian transit systems. It will argue that for any transit system to succeed it must offer a standard of service that can compete directly with the reliability and comfort of the private car. To ensure a sustainable market share it must attract both the visitor and commuter market and soundly integrate the central area with the existing metropolitan bus system. It should offer routes and fare structures that are fair and equitable and promote greater use of the Lake by forging links with ferry operators.

As a key role of the National Capital is to showcase national achievement to both Australian citizens and international visitors, the transit system should similarly represent the highest quality service and best-practice operation. In the longer term the service should aim to be promoted as a Canberra icon - perhaps like a ferry is to Sydney or a tram is to Melbourne - where locals and visitors alike will *want* to ride the system!

Ideally, it should strongly target the visiting day-tripper market, which would expand enormously, if and when the proposed fast rail link with Sydney becomes operational.

1.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project aim is to solve a planning related problem. In summary, the issue for resolution is to develop a transport system which improves mobility in and around the Central National Area with primary focus on linkages with the Parliamentary Zone. In developing a solution, the project will seek to address three key objectives:

- to provide enhanced transit-oriented mobility around the Central National Area for both visitors and workers;
- to promote ecologically sustainable development through reduced car dependence and greenhouse gas emissions; and
- to facilitate the realisation of the *Place of the People* with more activity and urbanity within the Parliamentary Zone.

Enhanced transit-oriented mobility

The key to the success of any urban place is its functionality and its attractiveness to people. The CNA of Canberra performs a very important role as the home of the nation's institutions and the national place of assembly. It is therefore critical that this place be open and accessible for all, especially that 40 per cent of the Australian population that does not have a driver's licence. (Hicks, 1999, p 90)

With the increasing pressures arising from growing popularity of the CNA a more balanced approach to better manage access is required. Cars should not be permitted to dominate the landscape in this important place. A new transit system, which is attractive, innovative and sustainable could serve to substantially enhance the level of access and, therefore, reinforce the metaphor of democracy incorporated into Griffin's plan. It should serve the needs of both visitors and residents, including the large workforce based in this area. It should showcase the National Capital but also integrate well with the existing transit system.

Promote Ecologically Sustainable Development

Despite its outward appearance of environmental harmony, the 'bush capital' maintains highly unsustainable mobility practices. The city has alarmingly high and rising greenhouse gas emissions from its transport sector. This is because the use of transit in Canberra is minimal and car dependence almost universal.

The paucity of public transport, for both locals and visitors, has resulted in the city being tagged a 'car city'. Visitors, therefore, rightly assume they will *need* the car to get around effectively or, if they don't have access to a car, they may not come at all.

To meet Australia's international obligations in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, a transit oriented approach to mobility must be taken seriously, and practical steps taken to demonstrate the value of public transport as a viable alternative to the car. The National Capital could show leadership by developing a demonstration project worthy of national or even international focus.

The Place of the People

For the *Place of the People* to function as the nation's most important gathering place – be it for leisure and recreation; education; or assembly; it must be easily accessible. As the Parliamentary Zone attracts more investment and public infrastructure, it will attract greater numbers of visitors. Public transport is the best means to move large numbers of people to and around such defined spaces.

The recently completed Parliamentary Zone Review (National Capital Authority, 2000a) which nominated access as the key element in the future success of the precinct, suggested that the provision of an intra-zone shuttle bus, linking key attractions with a series of car parks, would resolve the issue of access.

This project will argue that such a response, while a positive step in terms of promoting localised transit, is inadequate to meet the long term demands of the precinct, and would in fact entrench car dependence.

The most practical means of ensuring the long term and sustainable linkages required to make the *Place of the People* a success is to develop and implement a transit system that links the *Place of the People* to Canberra's city centre (Civic) and the rest of the transit network.

1.3 PROJECT STRUCTURE

The Project is defined and its main objectives presented in the *Introduction*.

The *Context* contains detailed analysis of recent changes to the public transit and private coach operations which have resulted in a decline in the accessibility of the Central National Area. It provides a brief overview of those recent planning and transport studies which have discussed the issue of access and updates the status of their implementation.

The chapter continues with a review of the planning policies in place with detailed examinations of the National Capital Plan; Territory Plan and ACT and Sub-Region Plan. It then goes on to examine relevant environmental policies including those addressing Ecologically Sustainable Development; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; and Integrating Land Use and Transport. The final part of *Context* assesses the recent Parliamentary Zone Review and its commitment to a *place of the people* with enhanced access.

The third chapter, *The Market for Transit*, identifies both the visitor and the commuter markets as forming the key segments for mobility in the Central National Area. It concludes that as each segment will complement rather than compete, they will add to the economic viability of the proposal.

Effecting Mode shift to Transit, examines the critical elements required to attract sufficient market share to support the viability of transit. It focuses on the quality of service; the quality of the infrastructure (including the vehicles used); and the all important provision of passenger information. It also provides a brief overview of management issues.

The fifth chapter, *Model Transit Services* samples a number of innovative transit operations with attributes with potential for application into a transit service in the Central National Area. The systems examined are the 'Nepean Nipper' services in Sydney's far western suburbs; Brisbane's inner city 'Hail and Ride'; Perth's 'Central Area Transit'; the tourist oriented 'Sydney Explorer' and 'Olympic Explorer' as well some recent trial services conducted in Canberra.

The final chapter, *Capital Transit - a Proposal to Enhance Access*, draws together the findings and recommends the introduction of a new bus-based transit system to serve the needs of both visitors and commuters in the Central National Area. It outlines a possible route structure, the infrastructure and service levels required; a management regime and potential funding sources including parking licensing. In recognition of its longer term potential, additional routes and services are also identified for future examination.