

2. Context

2.1 The Decline of Public Access

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2.3 Planning Policy

2.4 Environment Policy

2.5 Parliamentary Zone Review

2. CONTEXT

This chapter reviews the policies and practices which have worked to influence accessibility in the Central National Area (CNA).

The opening section (2.1) provides a brief overview of recent developments which have adversely impacted upon the accessibility of key institutions and attractions in the CNA. It examines the withdrawal of both public and private sector services which formerly served the tourist market as well new entrants to the market.

Section 2.2 provides an abridged commentary on the key planning studies which have examined the issue of accessibility and transport policy in the CNA over the past decade and a half. Elements of these studies have been incorporated into planning policy and have shaped the contemporary discourse. They provide valuable resource data and canvass issues which assist in building an understanding of the complexities that have been encountered in attempting to enhance accessibility across strong jurisdictional boundaries.

The city's governance and key planning instruments are reviewed in Section 2.3. The National Capital Plan, Territory Plan and the ACT Regional Plan are interrogated for their influence and guidance on access policy and outcomes in the CNA.

Section 2.4 reviews the main environmental issues and related public policy instruments that will guide the development of an enhanced transport system. Both National and Territory strategies in support of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) and the reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions; especially as they relate to transport outcomes, are examined in detail.

The recent Parliamentary Zone Review, completed in early 2000, is reviewed in Section 2.5. It focuses heavily on encouraging greater use of the Parliamentary Zone as the *Place for the People* and includes a number of initiatives aimed at promoting accessibility.

2.1 THE DECLINE OF PUBLIC ACCESS

Tourist services

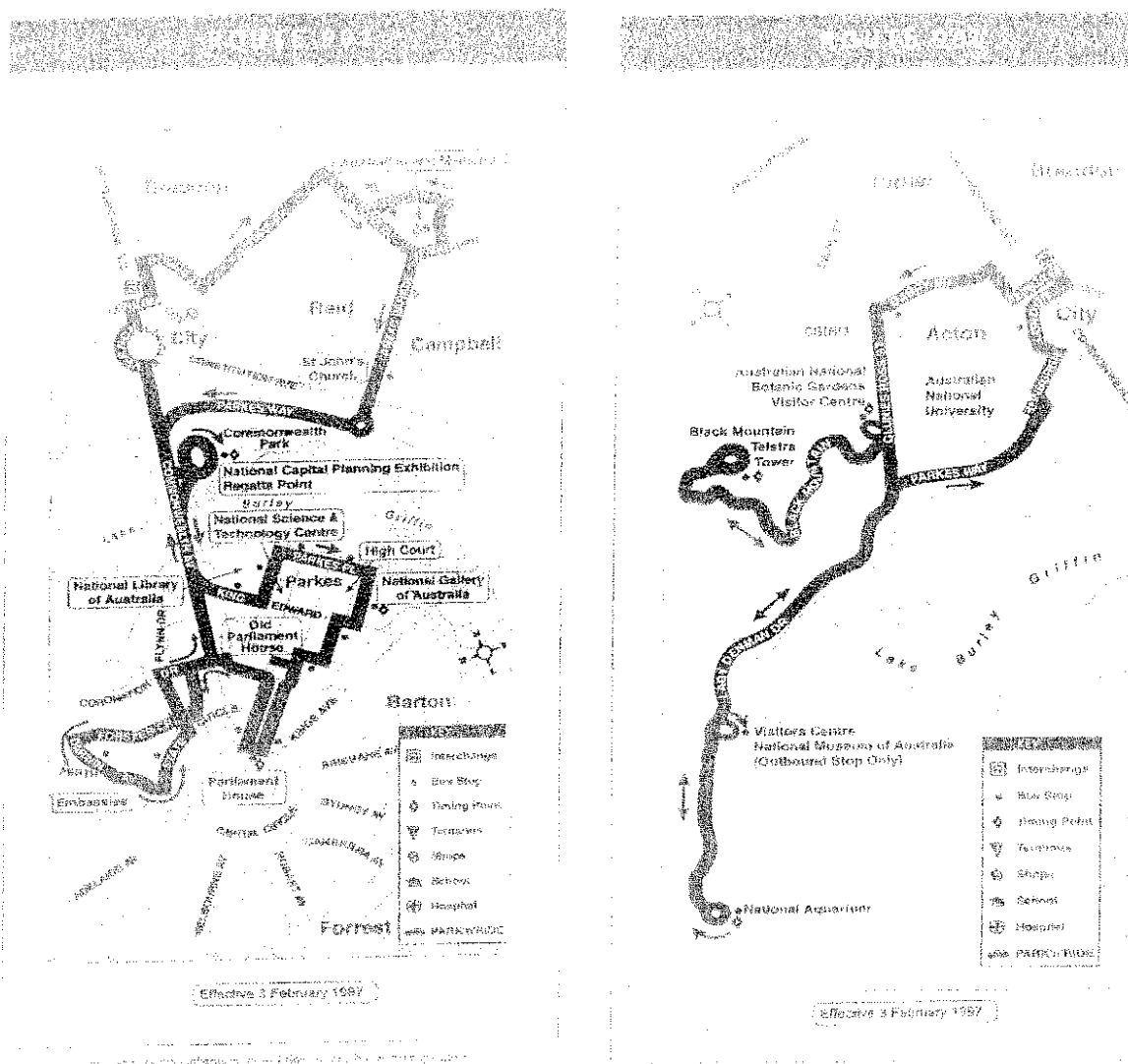
ACTION Sightseeing Routes 901 and 904

The ACT's public bus operator, ACTION, operated two dedicated sightseeing services for many years. (Figure 2.1) These services provided regular access to the National Capital's main attractions from the central city transport hub.

The first service (Route 901) operated a circuit commencing in Civic and served to the War Memorial; Anzac Parade; Regatta Point; the Parliamentary Zone attractions; the Yarralumla Embassies and return to Civic. This service operated a 30 minute frequency on weekdays (from 9.35 am to 4.05 pm) and hourly on weekends and holidays (from 10 am to 4 pm).

The second service (Route 904) operated a more remote circuit from Civic to the National Botanic Gardens; Telstra Tower on Black Mountain; the former National Museum of Australia Visitors Centre at Yarramundi Reach; the National Aquarium; and return to Civic. This service operated a 60 minute frequency each day (from 10.20 am to 3.20 pm with an extra service at 4.20 pm on weekends and holidays).

Figure 2.1 Discontinued ACTION Tourist Services



Source: ACTION (1997b) Canberra Tourist Route brochure

ACTION utilised standard buses on these routes and no set commentary was offered (but drivers often improvised!). Tickets for these ACTION services were relatively inexpensive as the normal route service fares applied (\$2 adult and \$1 concession per boarding, although daily tickets offered even greater savings for multiple rides - \$6.70 adult, \$2.70 concession or \$1 for a Pensioner Off-Peak Daily).

Regrettably, these relatively basic but inexpensive services fell victim to the ACTION network restructure in January 1999 with the claim that patronage levels did not warrant their continuation. Route 904, for example, was reported to have carried, on average, fewer than two people per trip (Canberra Times, 1999, p 5).

While it was highly probable that these services were poorly patronised, the failure to adequately promote their existence may have been a significant contributing factor. For example, essential information such as route maps and timetables were 'buried' on pages 266-269 at the back of the provider's timetable book (ACTION, 1997a) which had to be purchased by prospective patrons. A brochure publicising the services was available briefly in July 1997 (Figure 2.1) but appeared to be out of print for much of the subsequent period of operation.

Similarly, the buses themselves carried no promotional information about the service - just the route number and the words 'Sightseeing Service' in the destination panel. Bus stops and shelters served by these two routes were not equipped with any information which might assist tourists to identify the services.

Perhaps in response to criticism of the axing of the Sightseeing Services, ACTION subsequently produced specific promotional material to assist tourists to catch buses to major attractions (see Route Services, below).

The Canberra Explorer

Based on similar 'hop-on hop-off' tourist circuits in many other cities, the privately operated *Canberra Explorer* bus was a key means of accessing the major tourist sites for many years. However, more recently its fares increased sharply and popularity waned. There was a commensurate reduction in frequency with a single bus operating an extended 18 stop circuit at 120 minute intervals. Although professionally marketed (as part of the national Murrays Coaches operations), and offering a good range of ticketing options including half, full, two and three day passes, the relative high cost (\$18 for an adult day pass and \$55 for a family) saw the service discontinued in 1998. (Murrays Australia, 1998).

Figure 2.2
Discontinued 'Canberra Explorer'



Source: Author (1998)

While Murrays continues to offer escorted half and full day tours featuring the major attractions, the itinerary is fixed and the tickets expensive (about \$76 per adult and \$43 per child for a full day tour and \$34 and \$22 respectively for a half day). (Murrays Australia, 2000)

Canberra Tour

In March 2000 a new operator (City Sightseeing Pty Ltd) commenced a new service - 'Canberra Tour' - similar to the defunct Canberra Explorer. Operating a fleet of very distinctive red open-topped double-decker buses, the newcomer operates an 11 stop circuit extending from Civic (Northbourne Avenue) to Dickson via the War Memorial; Regatta Point; the Parliamentary Zone; and the Embassies in Yarralumla. (Figures 2.3, 2.4)

When services commenced in March 2000, Canberra Tour advertised a service frequency of 60 minutes on weekdays and 40 minutes at weekends. On selected services the on-board commentary caters for a range of languages including Spanish, French, German, Mandarin, Korean, Japanese and Malaysian. Tickets, which are valid for 24 hours, are relatively expensive at \$25 for adults and \$12.50 for children. (City Sightseeing, 2000; Canberra Times, 2000c, p 7)

Figure 2.3 The distinctive 'Canberra Tour' open top double deck bus operated by City Sightseeing Pty Ltd



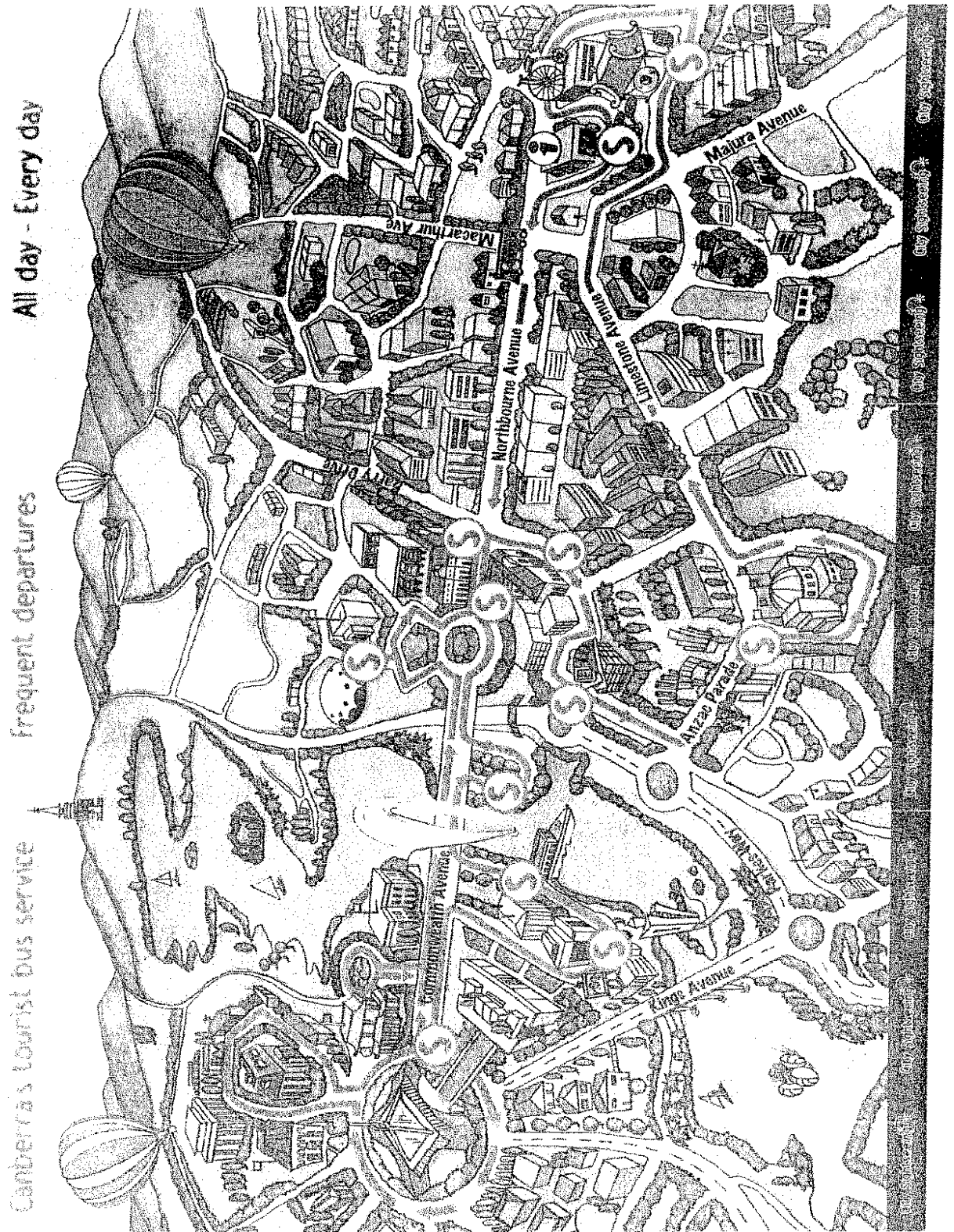
Source: Author (2001)

Like the Sydney Explorer (see section 5.4), Canberra Tours' extended circuit, multi-stop

operation serves an important segment of the visitor market.

While acknowledging the likely impact of seasonal factors, regular observations by the author indicate that patronage appears to be very light. In May 2001, the advertised frequency of service was reduced to 80 minutes with first and last buses departing Civic daily at 9.00 am and 4.20 pm respectively.

Figure 2.4 Route of 'Canberra Tour' bus



Source: City Sightseeing Pty Ltd (2000)

Route Services

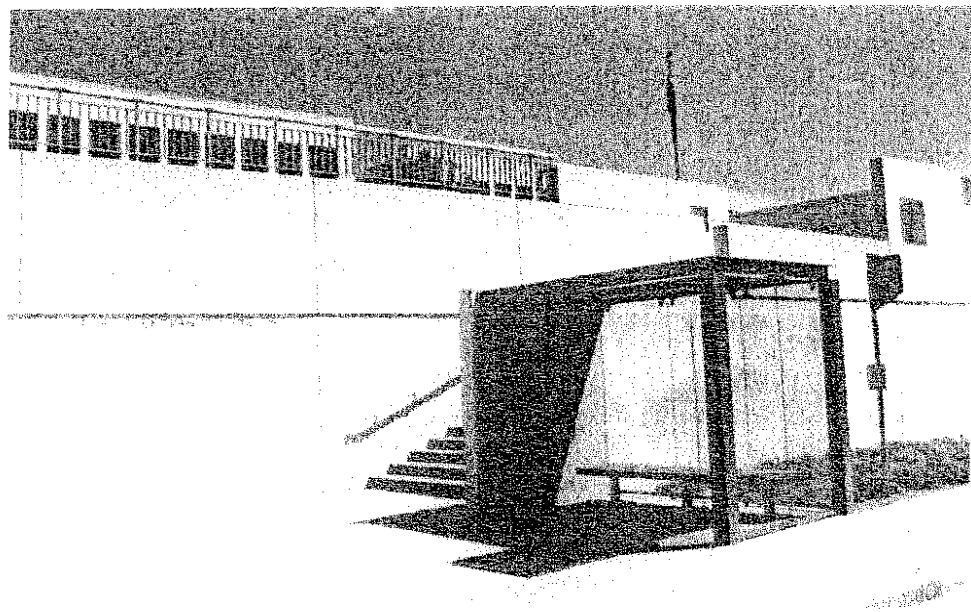
With the discontinuation of ACTION's dedicated sightseeing services through the Parliamentary Zone and surrounding CNA in early 1999, transit access to many attractions became more problematic and, in a number of instances, non-existent. All the attractions served by the former Route 904 - including the Australian National Botanic Gardens, Telstra Tower and the National Aquarium now have no public bus service whatsoever. Similarly, on the former Route 901, the National Capital Exhibition at Regatta Point has been excised from the ACTION network while services to other major attractions can be confusing and indirect. For example, the existing series of bus stops throughout the Parliamentary Zone do not serve the main public entrances of any of the key attractions - including Parliament House itself, nor are there any direct route services from the Parliamentary Zone linking Anzac Parade and the War Memorial.

ACTION's high frequency inter-town services, peak express services and many route services use only Commonwealth and Kings Avenues, thereby skirting the key attractions in the Zone. As an added inconvenience, each Avenue has only a single bus stop to serve its entire (1000 metre) length. Neither of these stops provide locality maps or other tourist directional information to assist visitors to find their way to the Zone's attractions.

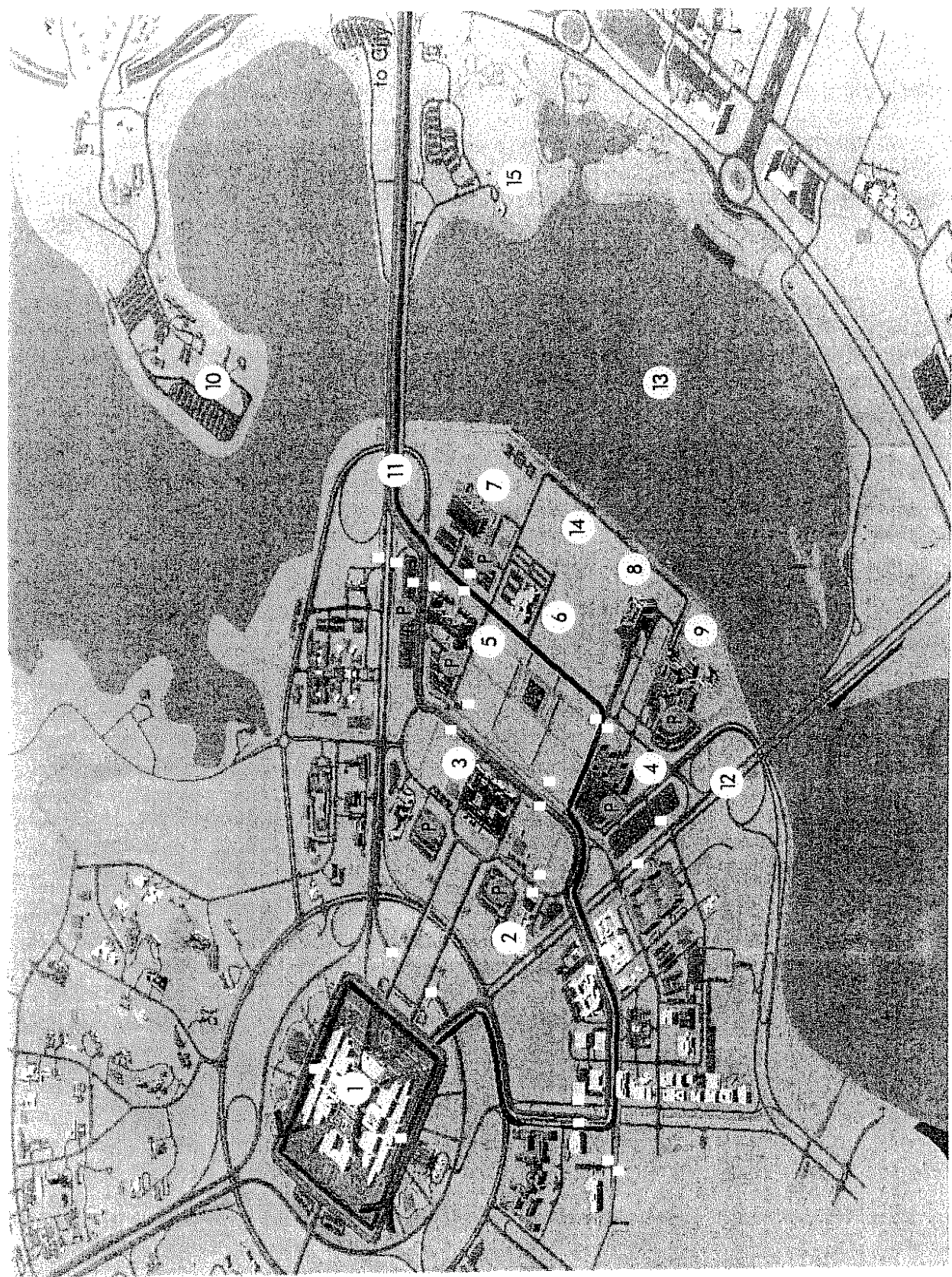
The current ACTION network provides for only four routes to traverse the Parliamentary Zone. (Figure 2.5)

Route No 34 (Belconnen - Civic - Parkes - Woden) which serves King Edward Terrace is the sole route serving the National Library; National Science and Technology Centre; High Court; and National Gallery. It is also noteworthy that this route passes closest to the Lake and the key employment nodes of the Treasury and John Gorton Buildings before heading south out of the Zone, through Barton, then returning to skirt Parliament House and on to Woden. Route 34 serves three bus stops - the stops in King Edward Terrace and Parkes Place offer no shelter while the stops on Parliament Drive (on each side of the Parliament House) are 500 metres from the main public entry point to Parliament House. (Figure 2.6)

Figure 2.6 Bus stop at Parliament Drive (east) – this stop serves Parliament House – but is located some 500 metres from the public entrance



Source: Author (2001)



- 1 Parliament House
- 2 National Archives Building
- 3 Old Parliament House
- 4 John Gorton Building
- 5 Treasury Building
- 6 National Science & Technology Centre
- 7 National Library of Australia
- 8 High Court of Australia
- 9 National Gallery of Australia
- 10 Museum of Australia
- 11 Commonwealth Avenue
- 12 Kings Avenue
- 13 Lake Burley Griffin
- 14 Commonwealth Place
- 15 National Capital Exhibition
- P Major Carparks
- ACTION Route 31
- ACTION Route 39
- ACTION Route 34
- ACTION Route 36
- Current Bus Stop

CENTRAL NATIONAL AREA, CANBERRA - PUBLIC BUS ROUTES

Route No 31 (Girralang - Civic - Parkes - Woden) which operates via Langton Street (Treasury Building) and then along King George Terrace passing Old Parliament House. Like Route 34 it then leaves the Zone and passes through Barton, before returning to skirt around Parliament House. A total of four stops are served in the Zone, each with shelter, but the two stops in King George Terrace as well as the Parliament Drive stops are sited well away from the main points of public entry.

Route No 36 (Watson - Civic - Parkes - Symonston) serves the Treasury Building in Langton Street then via King George Terrace past Old Parliament House and on to Barton. It serves the same three sheltered bus stops within the Zone as Route 31 but not those in Parliament Drive.

Route No 39 (EPIC - Civic - Parkes - Causeway), like Routes 31 and 36 operates along Langton Street and King George Terrace but remains within the Zone as it approaches Parliament House via Federation Mall. It serves all sheltered bus stops, including the stop in Federation Mall which is arguably the best located, albeit some distance, for tourists seeking to visit Parliament House. (Figure 2.7)

Figure 2.7 Bus stop at Federation Mall (east) – this stop serves Parliament House but located well away from the public entrance (centre background)



Source: Author: 2001

The service characteristics for each of the four ACTION routes is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 ACTION bus routes serving Parliamentary Zone - Frequency (minutes)

Time of day	Route 31	Route 34	Route 36	Route 39
Weekdays				
Peak hours	20-30	30	20-30	20-30
Off-peak	40	30	40	40
Night	Nil	60-90	Nil	70-90
Weekends				
Saturday	Nil	60	Nil	60
Sunday & Hols	Nil	60 (til 7.15 pm)	Nil	60 (til 6.30 pm)

Source: ACTION (2000)

The frequency of service offered on most of these routes is very poor, particularly when most visitors would be seeking to travel. It should also be noted that timetable frequencies, particularly during peak times and at night are often inconsistent (ie they do not follow easily remembered stopping patterns such as 5 and 35 minutes past the hour) making the service less attractive to commuters.

In an attempt to promote these and other services to the visitor market ACTION has produced a 19 page pocket guide *Sightseeing around Canberra using ACTION buses* (ACTION, 1999). The publication, which also appears at the ACTION web site (see Appendix A) provides a good overview of how to access those attractions that continue to be served by the ACTION network, including those in the Zone, as well as general information about using buses, ticketing, etc. Each attraction is briefly described along with its opening times; the bus route to use and the departure platform from *each* interchange it operates through. At the back it contains a locality map and quick reference guide matching each attraction with the relevant bus route number.

Perhaps the main criticism of the hard copy version of the pocket guide is its lack of specific route information, including maps and timetables, but it does provide a comprehensive overview of where to obtain such information including ACTION offices; newsagents; phone and internet.

Analysis

Tourist access to the National Capital's main attractions has deteriorated significantly since the withdrawal of the dedicated ACTION tourist routes and Murray's Explorer services.

ACTION is now relying on services that are designed essentially to serve commuters and the general community wishing to travel from suburban destinations to Civic and return. The promotion of these services to tourists, while commendable, appears more of an afterthought than part of a well planned tourist access strategy. Observations by the author indicate relatively few patrons use these services specifically to reach the Zone's attractions.

The new private sector operator, while innovative, provides a service which is relatively infrequent and unaffordable for many people.

The Parliamentary Zone continues to lack intra-zone services which would link the Lake and Parliament House for example. Indeed, none of the services listed directly serve the Lake foreshore or the two ferry jetties (which have been in place for a number of years). Services do not integrate with Lake activities, particularly cruises and other pleasure craft.

Another significant problem with the current route services is that they do not directly serve the main public entry points of the major attractions. Bus stops tend to be situated some distance from the buildings they purport to serve and, in some cases are located in desolate, exposed mid-block locations with no amenities (eg the Parkes Place stop serving the National Gallery and High Court which is shown at Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8 Bus stop at Parkes Place – this stop serves the National Gallery, High Court & the John Gorton Building offices . Note its exposed position offering no shelter, seating or passenger information



Source: Author (2001)

In the case of the most important and popular of the attractions in the Zone, Parliament House, it seems difficult to understand why none of the three routes serving it actually deliver passengers to the main public entrance. Of the bus stops provided, two are opposite the non-public entry points at the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the third set of stops are located in Federation Mall, some distance away from the front door. While each stop has basic shelter they are all located well away from where people actually want to go! The best location for such an important visitor (not forgetting the commuter potential) destination node would be to upgrade and use the bus terminus facilities at the head of the large underground car park which provides all weather shelter, toilet facilities and disabled (lift) access. It would also serve as a key promotional point for transit alternatives as tourists who drive would need to pass the terminus as they make their way into Parliament House.

Apart from the generally spartan and uninviting nature of the bus stops in the Zone, there is a general lack of information for visitors to assist them to navigate through the area. Locality maps, directional signage; clearly defined pedestrian and cycling pathways; appropriate lighting; general bus information, etc, are all lacking.

2.2 EARLIER REMEDIES

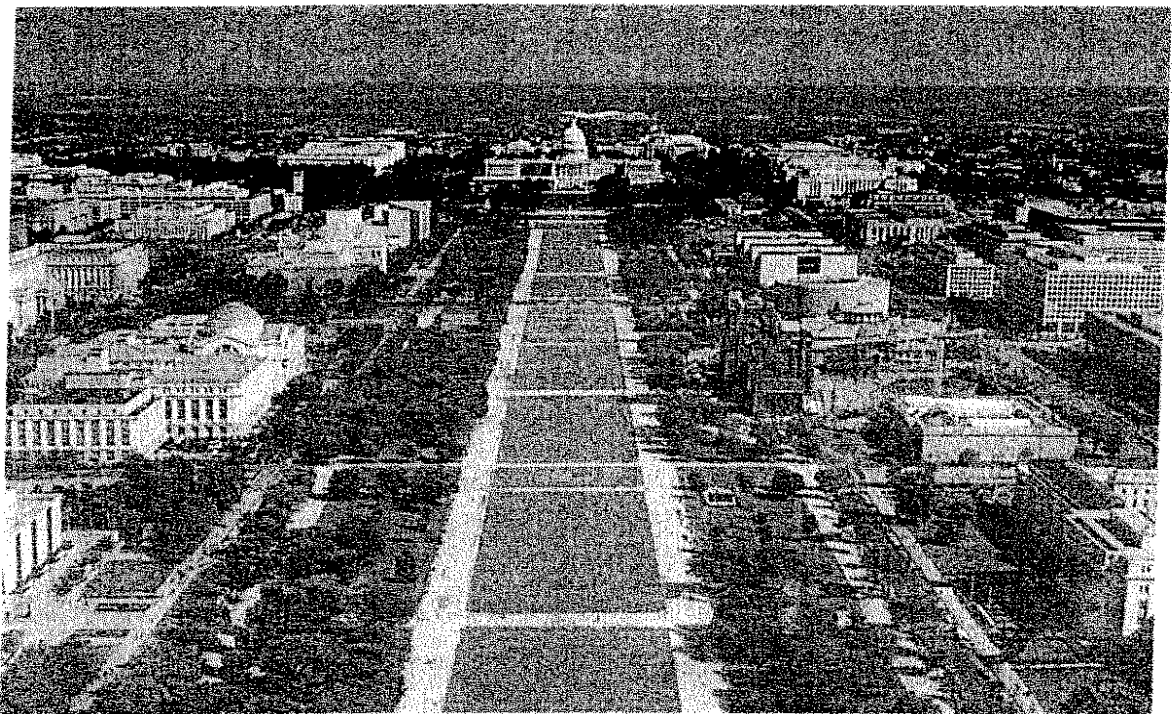
1986 - Parliamentary Zone Development Plan

The *Parliamentary Zone Development Plan* (National Capital Development Commission, 1986) was prepared essentially in response to the imminent completion of the New

Parliament House but also set the framework for subsequent development in the Parliamentary Zone. It promoted establishing a stronger north-south land axis based largely on the Washington Mall in Washington DC (Figure 2.9) and canvassed the need to upgrade public transport, parking and other amenities for workers and visitors coming to the Parliamentary Zone.

It noted two key weaknesses impacting on accessibility to the Parliamentary Zone. Firstly, that both the Commonwealth and Kings Avenue axes, as major arterial road routes, effectively isolated the area from its surrounds and wider the metropolitan road network. Secondly, that the road system within the Zone was circuitous and largely illegible for visitors. (p 9)

Figure 2.9 Washington Mall, Washington DC



Source: National Capital Development Commission, (1986), p 6

The problem was summarised as "...tourists do not explore the Zone on foot: for the most part they drive. Of the just under 500,000 visitors during the last 12 months an estimated 85 per cent arrived by car and because the various points of interest are relatively scattered the great majority move from one attraction to the other by car." (p 10)

Further "...tourist buses...follow a circuitous route through the Parliamentary Zone and adjacent areas of interest in Yarralumla and Forrest with the result that for many passengers the Parliamentary Zone never registers as a place of significance or symbolic importance. As a consequence the physical centre of the National Capital has no image and in the minds of most visitors it is not much more than a scatter of large buildings existing in a bland and formless landscape." (p 13)

The Plan expected that with the opening of the new Parliament House, a new pattern of tourist circulation would evolve with visitors first drawn to Capital Hill and then follow a northerly movement towards the attractions nearer the Lake. To cater for these projected tourist movements the Plan called for new vehicular and pedestrian routes "...reinforced by a combination of information and directional signs, distinctive lighting and a variety of

embellishments [for] emphasis, punctuation and direction." (p 13)

It noted that largest single land use category in the Parliamentary Zone was car parking with some 4,100 spaces provided, mainly in surface car parks. These surface car parks extended for some 10.2 hectares, an area greater than that occupied by buildings. The result being that the visual environment was dominated by car parks. It was also apparent at that time that demand for parking was exceeding supply in some locations and conflicts were becoming apparent between long stay (commuter) and short stay (visitor) needs. Pay parking was recommended as a mechanism to control the growth in demand. (pp 14, 48)

At the time of publishing the Plan new public bus routes to serve both the new Parliament House and the rest of the Zone were yet to be determined. Only a single route service actually entered the Zone then (although others, including the high frequency inter-town service operated along Commonwealth Avenue). This service, which operated from Civic to Barton and beyond, provided good commuter access to the Treasury Building and Old Parliament House but was less attractive to tourists wanting to visit the major attractions nearer the Lake or travel outside peak periods.

Even though the privately operated 'Explorer' tourist bus service operated throughout the Zone its 40 minute frequency and circuitous route structure did not suit visitors wishing to travel easily between attractions.

The Plan concluded that public transport for tourists and for those wishing to travel within the Zone was unsatisfactory - accounting for 18 per cent of peak trips but less than 10 per cent of off peak trips (p 16). (Such a result today would be a highly acclaimed success!) The consequence was a heavy reliance on private vehicles both to and within the Zone and an unsustainable demand for parking.

The Development Plan went on to support the introduction of an intra-Zone public transport system which would cater primarily for movements between the major tourist attractions. It suggested this take the form of light buses or bus-trains (similar to Washington Mall's 'tourmobile' concept) which would operate a circuit between New Parliament House, the major attractions and connect with proposed ferry services.

Analysis/Outcomes

The Parliamentary Zone Development Plan provided a very comprehensive analysis of the issues facing the Parliamentary Zone as it confronted the major shift in political focus from the provisional, centrally located, Parliament House to the huge new structure in the Zone's southern apex. It made a serious effort to put forward realistic solutions to the transport and access problems it identified.

The Development Plan was subsequently approved by the Parliament in 1987; and a construction program developed in 1989 (discussed in detail below); and the urban design elements incorporated into the 1990 National Capital Plan. No immediate action was taken to act on its transport recommendations but an implementation strategy was announced in 1989 (see below).

1989 - Parliamentary Zone - Development Programme

To maintain the momentum of the 1986 Development Plan the then newly established National Capital Planning Authority proposed an implementation strategy known as the *Parliamentary Zone - Development Programme* (National Capital Planning Authority, 1989). Demonstrating considerable foresight, the strategy acknowledged that the Parliamentary Zone was set to be the centre stage for the Centenary of Federation celebrations in 2001, and aimed for "a significant degree of completion...by that date" (p v)

Parliamentary Zone Development Plan

The National Capital Development Commission has the statutory responsibility to 'plan, develop and construct' the City of Canberra as the National Capital of the Commonwealth. In the specific case of the Parliamentary Zone the Commission is required by virtue of the *Parliament Act 1974*, to obtain the approval of each House of Parliament prior to the erection of buildings or other works.

The purpose of the Development Plan is to establish a physical pattern of roads, subdivision and potential building sites as a basis for future development proposals which in turn derive from growth and change in levels of activity, such as employment, tourism, functions of the Parliament, national institutions and so forth. The implementation of the Plan is dependent upon the availability of funds from the budget.

Lake Foreshore: A tree-lined promenade is proposed along the Lake edge to be paralleled by the existing cycleway. The foreshore roadway is to be realigned and will incorporate lay-by parking for tourist buses adjacent to the ferry wharf.

New Buildings: It is proposed that, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Archive and Exposition Building and the National Science Centre be located on these sites.

King George Terrace: Although not essential it is considered desirable that this road be terminated on either side of Capital Parade, partly to discourage east-west through traffic and partly to create a civic space in front of the Provisional Parliament House thereby minimising the number of interruptions to the continuity of the median from a pedestrian viewpoint.

Camp Hill: The natural summit of the Hill will be lowered to permit the construction of dual carriageways bridging over both Capital and State Circles thereby connecting the new and the old Parliament buildings. These works are currently being constructed. Camp Hill is to be landscaped and will incorporate passive recreation and picnic facilities to cater for tourist 'overflows' from Capital Hill. A limited number of surface car parks will also be included and sited in such a manner that in the longer term they could be utilised as building sites to house activities requiring close proximity to Parliament.

Commonwealth Avenue Extension: To provide direct access to the New Parliament House, especially from Civic Centre. These works are currently being constructed.

Ferry Wharf: At the point where Capital Parade meets the Lake it is proposed to construct a ferry wharf and breakwater. Functionally this will allow tourists to visit and other points of interest on the lake by travelling by ferry. Visually it will mark the intersection of the land axis and the lake axis in place of Griffin's proposed Gate.

Capital Parade: The realisation of Capital Parade as a carriage-way to allow north-south movement by vehicles and pedestrians between the New Parliament House and the Lake wide median is to be lined on either side with native trees and articulated into areas of varying character to create useful, visually attractive active and passive recreation spaces.

Provisional Parliament House: It will be necessary to refurbish the existing building when its future use has been determined. The south facade and the roof will have to be reconstructed because of their proximity to the New Parliament House. Because of the centrality of this particular site it is important that a tourist information centre be located in the building after its evacuation by Parliament, or alternatively, a building for such a purpose be erected in the vicinity. The east and west gardens require re-planning depending upon the future use of the Provisional Parliament House.

Kings Avenue Extension: To provide direct access to the New Parliament House, especially from the airport.

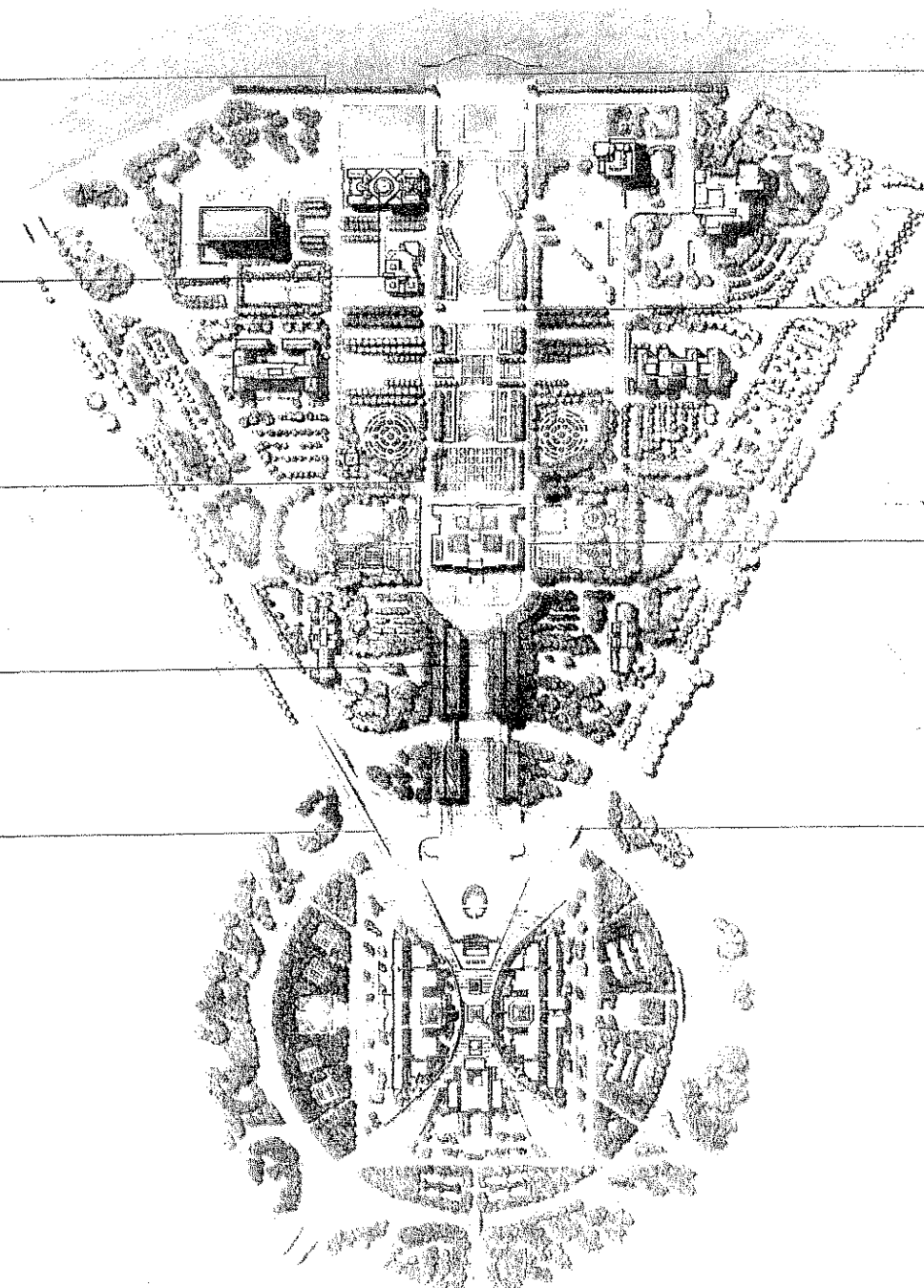


Figure 2.10 Parliamentary Zone Development Plan
Source: Parliamentary Zone Development Plan (1985)

The nine year staged programme (illustrated at Figure 2.10) focused mainly on civic works that would benefit visitors by enhancing linkages rather than constructing new buildings. These works included:

- a promenade on the Lake foreshore (encouraging pedestrian activity between the National Library, the National Science and Technology Centre, High Court and National Gallery of Australia);
- new north-south roads (now known as Federation Mall) to directly link the new Parliament complex to the Foreshore. These roads would also serve to "facilitate the operation of an internal bus system serving visitors..." (p 10);
- refurbishing Old Parliament House with an improved forecourt and developing a new Lake-shore Forecourt (the latter is now incorporated into the proposed Commonwealth Place - see Parliamentary Zone Review); and
- enhanced landscaping and infrastructure for Federation Mall and King Edward Terrace, with some possible new and extended buildings at the conclusion of the programme.

Once the links were in place, it was suggested that visitors would park their vehicles at one of the Zone's car parks and then join the proposed Zone based shuttle bus system to tour the attractions within the Zone (p 19)

Analysis/Outcomes

While a number of the proposed design elements have come to fruition (notably the Foreshore Promenade and parts of Federation Mall), most of the issues relating to access have remained unresolved. The recommendations put forward in the Parliamentary Zone Development Plan and its subsequent Development Programme have generally not been pursued (possibly due to the major administrative changes of the time which saw the NCDC abolished and replaced with the much smaller and less powerful National Capital Planning Authority and a redistribution of responsibilities with the establishment of self government in the ACT in 1989).

Free parking throughout the Zone continues to fuel commuter demand and undermine the viability of public transport, which continued to lose market share throughout the following decade. Public transport access remains poor - more public bus route services now transit through the Zone but none provide a service wholly within the Zone. While the private 'Explorer' tourist service was discontinued some years ago, the new private operator, 'City Sightseeing Pty Ltd', has commenced a daily service with a 40-60 minute frequency with a lengthy single direction circuit which incorporates only part of the Zone. Perhaps partly because the proposed Mall roadways and forecourt developments were not completed the proposed intra-Zone shuttle bus concept did not eventuate. While private cruise vessels operate on the Lake, none provide a regular ferry service linking the Parliamentary Zone with other attractions around the Lake, nor coordinate with public bus services.

1994 - Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone

The Proposal for Pay Parking in the Parliamentary Zone (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, 1994) was undertaken by the Parliamentary Committee in response to a proposal by the National Capital Planning Authority to introduce paid voucher parking into the Parliamentary Zone. The Authority planned to use paid parking as a means to generate revenue which could partly fund a four year works program aimed at restoring and replacing Commonwealth assets in the National Capital. (p 3)

The proposal for paid parking was aimed not at short-stay tourists, but rather the all day stay commuters who worked in the large government departments as well as the national

institutions located within the Parliamentary Zone. (p 11)

The Committee canvassed a range of opposing views in respect of the proposal including the equity and fairness of seeking to raise revenue for National Capital purposes (with benefits for the whole nation) from a minority of workers who happen to be located within the Parliamentary Zone. The Authority countered these views by arguing that the main users of the assets concerned (the car parks) should help to maintain them; and noted that many workers in other parts of Canberra paid for parking.

At that time the supply of parking in the Zone exceeded demand, therefore rationing was not considered necessary. (p 10)

When examining the impact that pay parking would have on stimulating mode shift, the Committee noted that the existing public bus services through the Zone were considered inadequate and that the public bus operator, ACTION, was unwilling to guarantee an improved level of service in the event of pay parking. (p 17)

The Report found that "...one of the major difficulties in using public transport to and from the Zone, is the simple fact that it is not on a major bus interchange (such as Civic, Belconnen or Woden). Therefore, using public transport "...is not nearly as convenient as for the workers in these areas." (p 18)

It was noted that the Authority had been investigating the feasibility of a special subsidised ACTION bus service (although a full fare would still need to be paid by users) catering for both workers and tourists travelling within the Zone from Civic. The Report found that "...while this may assist tourists visiting the Zone, and is to be commended, the Committee is concerned that this proposal would do little for the workers in the Zone, who, for example, wished to visit Civic at lunch time to conduct private business, or indeed improve the services to and from the Zone in the peak travel periods." (p 18)

The Authority was criticised by the Committee for its apparent lip-service commitment to reduced vehicle use when it was pointed out that should any significant mode shift eventuate, its effect on parking revenue targets would need to be seriously downgraded. The Authority had reported that, based on its experience in Civic, "...there was little observable change in the travel behaviour until it got to a threshold level...with some of the peak rates being \$7 a day. At this level you start to see some change in behaviour but with the lower charges there was not an observable one." (evidence quoted on p 19)

The Committee subsequently recommended rejection of the proposal to allow paid parking into the Parliamentary Zone. The grounds for doing so included:

- the parking revenue targets were unlikely to be met without a significant increase in the rates charged and that these would not be commensurate with the 'real commercial value' of the parking sites;
- the funds raised would not continue to be used to improve national capital assets;
- concerns of the institutions over the potential effect on visitor numbers and the financial implications of Fringe Benefits Tax were not allayed;
- there was no certainty that improvements would be made to public transport links into the Zone, particularly at peak periods;
- insufficient attention had been paid to the role of the Zone as a location for substantial employment but without normal commercial and community services found at other centres; and
- the erection of parking signage and voucher machines would have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the Parliamentary Zone. (p 26)

Analysis/Outcomes

The rejection by the Parliament of this proposal to introduce paid parking made very clear its concerns that parking should not be used merely as a means to raise revenue, particularly for purposes unrelated to the service for which the charge is applied. The Committee's finding also provides a caution to any future proposal to introduce paid parking - that the revenue so raised may not necessarily be used to support other, albeit beneficial initiatives, such as improved public transport, within the Zone. While such a restrictive position is not necessarily reflective of contemporary policy and practices (see later discussion of parking licence fees supporting public transport in Sydney and Perth at 6.3), it shows that proponents must prepare a convincing case for any policy which may produce a straight cross subsidy and therefore produce greater inequities.

1995 - Central National Area Study - Design Report

Looking to the Future - Central National Area Study - Design Report (National Capital Planning Authority, 1995), emphasised the potential role for Russell as the third, yet to be completed, apex of the National Triangle. It raised the prospect of it becoming a new gateway and entry point into the National Capital. Russell would become a new activity hub or 'Exchange' for transport, commerce and accommodation.

As the principal arrival point for visitors, it envisaged the proposed Exchange "would include the train station, coach terminal and light rail terminus and would receive traffic arriving through the new entrance to the capital." (p 9)

The Study examined the broad issues relating to the Central National Area, and supported more intensive development, particularly along the main road axes (Kings, Commonwealth and Constitution Avenues and at their respective apexes. It viewed this intensification of activity as creating a threshold for upgrading the bus-based public transport system to light rail. Two routes were foreshadowed, the first linking Belconnen to Queanbeyan via Constitution Avenue and the second from Gungahlin to Tuggeranong via Civic and Woden (travelling along the Commonwealth Avenue axis). In addition the Study proposed "...a tram around the National Triangle...as a distribution system to the metropolitan transport system. This system would also serve tourists." (p 13)

Looking to the Future provided the conceptual basis for the Central National Area study with the next phase of design refinement covered in the companion work *Design Dialogue* which was released shortly after (see below). Outcomes and analysis are covered jointly below.

1995 - Design Dialogue - Central National Area Design Study

A companion document, *Design Dialogue - Central National Area Design Study* (National Capital Planning Authority, 1995), followed up on the design concepts developed in 'Looking to the Future' and outlined a process of design refinement, policy development and recommendations. (Figure 2.11)

It provided considerable focus on identifying the qualities sought for the National Capital:

"The central national area should reflect Australian society and culture. It belongs to all Australians, and should be representative of the nation." (p 9)

The report argued that the Central National Area should be open and accessible to all Australians and international visitors. However, it noted that over time, elements of Griffin's original composition had been moved or left incomplete, with "...areas being separated and detached from the city [so that] connection is primarily through the insular experience of the automobile." (p 14)

In terms of practical solutions to the dilemma of access, the report reiterated the call for light rail to link Belconnen to Queanbeyan and Gungahlin to Tuggeranong (without offering route locations). It also recommended concentrating development within and around the National Triangle and "...providing a public transport system around the National Triangle as part of a large metropolitan system." (p 30)

Analysis/Outcomes

Since completion of the phased CNA study, the development of the Russell apex has continued, albeit as the hub of Defence administration rather than as the proposed 'Exchange' concept. The completed works are, however, sympathetic to the long-term development of the area as a new city gateway.

Although some preliminary route design work for the planned inter-town public transport link has been completed for the Civic - Belconnen section (Totalcare Projects, 1998), no advances have been made towards implementing the transport initiatives in the study.

1996 - Strategy for the Provision of Parking and Public Transport in Parkes-Barton & Environs

The objectives of the *Strategy for the Provision of Parking and Public Transport in Parkes-Barton & Environs* (National Capital Planning Authority, 1996) which was prepared by consultants Arup Transportation Planning, were to identify, assess and recommend strategic transport planning options for the Parliamentary Zone and the rapidly emerging employment area in adjacent Barton. The study aimed to "...provide a significant input to the development of a major planning control document for the future development of the entire precinct, which could also serve as a model for other areas of the ACT." (p i)

This study drew heavily on data and findings contained in numerous other studies and reports which had been commissioned over the previous five years (including those discussed above).

In terms of mode split, it noted the heavy reliance on private vehicles to access the precinct (87 per cent of arrivals) with only 9 per cent people travelling by bus and 2 per cent using a bicycle. (p ii)

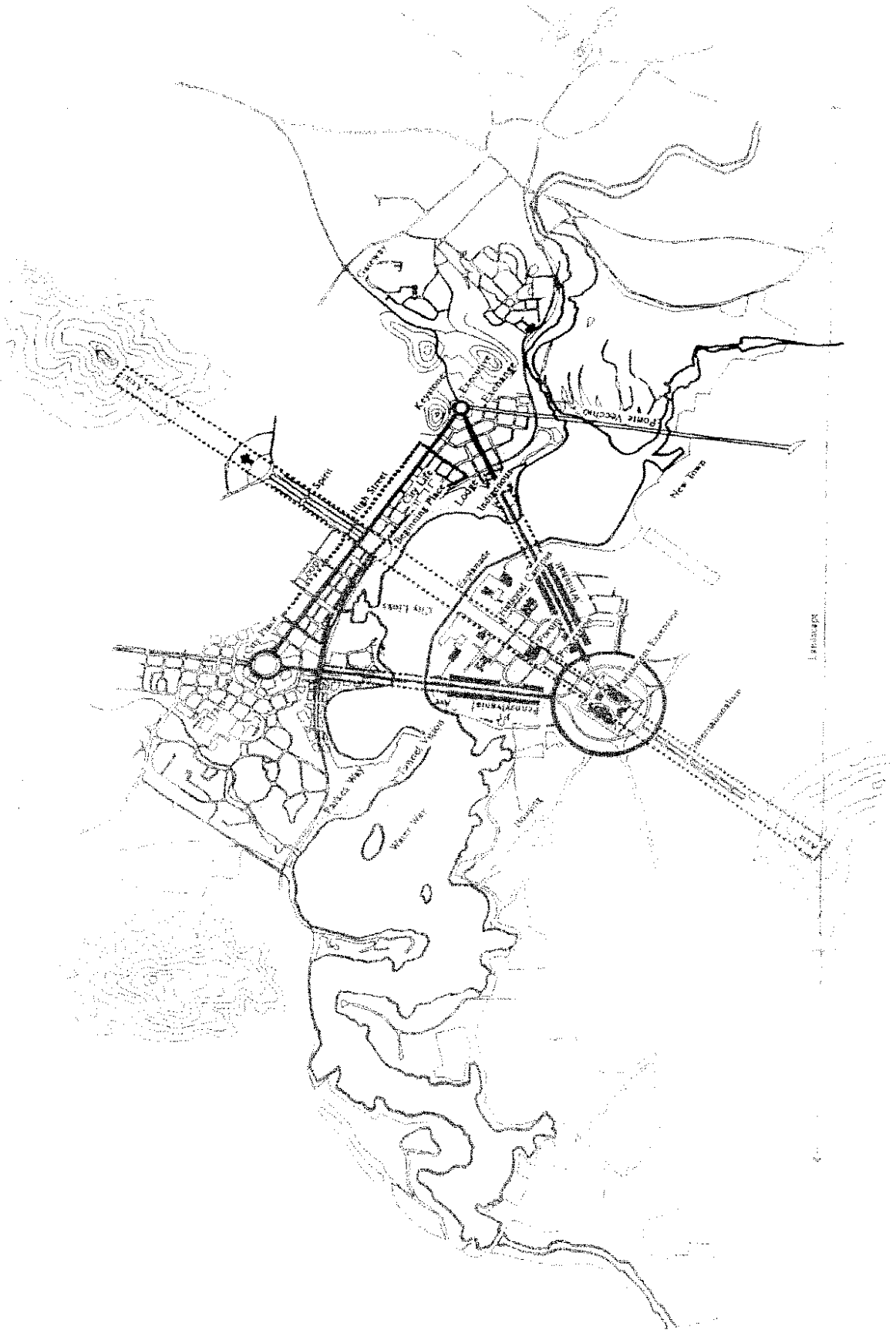
The Strategy found that bus service frequencies were much lower in Barton, partially due to the inclusion of the intertown express services in the Parkes count (even though these operated on Commonwealth Avenue, technically outside the Parliamentary Zone). It also found some incidence of Civic-bound commuters using the free parking in the Parliamentary Zone and then using the bus to finish their journeys. (p ii)

In relation to parking, the Strategy suggested that if reasonable modal shift was achieved then the parking provision rate could be reduced from the existing 2.5 spaces per 100m² of Gross Floor Area (GFA) to between 1.5 and 2.0 spaces per 100m², but noted that calculation did not take into account specific area shortages. (p ii)

Noting that "...accessibility by car to the Barton-Parkes area is no better than for Civic and public transport accessibility is much lower", the study raised the question as to whether new employment generating developments would have been better located in Civic. (p iv)

The Strategy concluded that "to achieve a reduction in dependence on self drive private vehicles for commuter access - a [Total Demand Management] based approach is required. This necessarily requires a shift in demand to other modes and an increase in private vehicle occupancy." (p v)

Figure 2.11 Central National Area Design Study - Design Dialogue - Concept Plan



Source: Central National Area Design Study - Design Dialogue (1995)

Given the fact that most development demand was in Barton (Figures 2.12, 2.13), it saw an urgent need to address the pay parking issue at that location first and, in view of the Joint Standing Committee's earlier rejection of pay parking in Parkes (as discussed above), to specifically address that area later. (p vi)

The inherent difficulties in convincing governments to support public transport were acknowledged - "...it is neither prudent nor practical to pursue a mode shift to public transport as the sole option for reducing dependence on the private vehicle. A commitment of ACT Government resources to improving the level of service offered by public transport in the ACT is unlikely, as evidenced by the current reduction in the ACTION budget and the attitude to alternatives such as light rail. Indications are that deregulation of the ACT [public transport] market may be attractive to ACT Government and would afford the opportunity for new and innovative public transport services which are not necessarily dependent on ACT budget financing." (p vi)

The Strategy claimed it was unable to "...develop a detailed specification for future public transport performance" because of ACTION's unwillingness to share data or service improvement proposals; the current or likely future demand for services could only be estimated in terms of a desirable reduction in private vehicle trips, which would mean changes in travel behaviour including higher bus patronage; and a lack of user survey information relating to the origin of trips to Barton. (p vi)

It estimated, however, that a reduction in private vehicle trips of 10 per cent would lead to a 50 per cent increase in public transport patronage. However, to achieve this, the study suggested that the service offered by ACTION would need to be a rapid shuttle comparable with the high frequency inter-town service. (pp vi-vii)

The Strategy put forward an innovative but complex parking policy based on modelling TDM outcomes. It provided for a combination of reduced supply; user pays and a trust arrangement whereby developer contributions were to be pooled to fund a range of transport projects such as new parking structures as well as public transport initiatives. The overall intent was to better manage the level of demand by restricting the supply of parking. The main points were:

- pay parking be introduced at a minimum charge of \$5 day;
- the deemed parking rate changed from 2.5 to 2 spaces /100m² GFA;
- off site parking be funded by developers contributing to either Commonwealth or ACT parking trusts;
- trust fund resources may be applied to transport needs other than parking, in the longer term;
- reduction of some existing car parking as a means to influence travel mode decisions;
- 5 per cent reduction of parking provision requirement where good cycling facilities are provided (ie lockers, showers, etc in office buildings);
- cash in lieu for a rate of parking to be provided as a redeemable contribution as a TDM performance bond. (pp vii-viii)

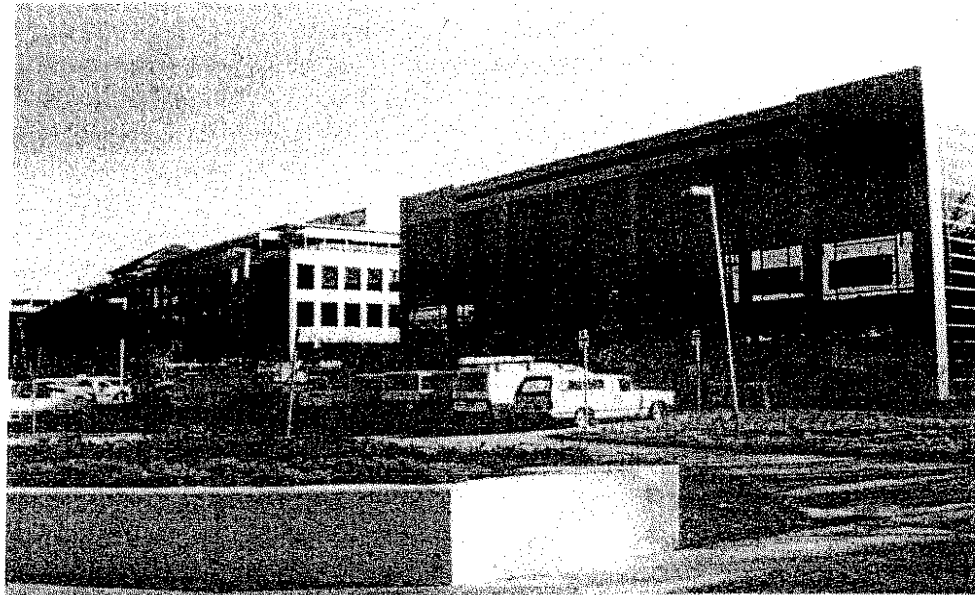
The Strategy claimed that it provided an all inclusive approach to the issue of Traffic Demand Management (TDM):

"By providing for a refundable TDM performance payment as an incentive for the private sector to participate, the various elements necessary to achieve a more efficient and effective transport system, and higher usage of public transport, are more likely to be achieved.

"By splitting the cash in lieu component into an amount for the provision of public car parking and a refundable amount for other TDM facilities, the land owners have greater flexibility in balancing the competing demands of the workforce.

"Rather than just concentrating on supplying sufficient parking to allow all who wish to drive to do so, this broader and more holistic approach facilitates alternative travel choices." (p viii)

Figure 2.12 New office development in Barton is fuelling demand for parking



Source: Author (2000)

Figure 2.13 Overspill parking is common in Barton – this example is adjacent to Blackall Street



Source: Author (2000)

Analysis/Outcomes

Probably the most important finding of this study was its quiet assertion that further employment generating development would be better located in Civic with its well established public transport links and parking management regime. It was an acknowledgment that solving the emerging transport problems in rapidly growing Barton would be very difficult, given its remoteness from services and high dependence on private vehicles for access.

The Strategy was hampered by a lack of data and government commitment to public transport; the earlier rejection of pay parking in Parkes and a complex parking and TDM methodology which was highly reliant on developer cooperation and support.

While the study's Steering Committee saw the Strategy as worthwhile, it signalled its concern that the relative complexity of the proposals, particularly in relation to establishing the Parking Trust as a key element, would make it difficult to implement. The Committee therefore proposed a staged implementation. (p viv)

Implementation of its recommendations appears to have stalled. With its release coinciding with the significant down-sizing of government activity from 1996, pressures for new development in the Barton area also declined significantly. To date, despite some investment by the ACT Government in providing additional surface parking on future development sites, no moves have been made towards establishing the proposed parking trust. The frequency of some transit services have improved (and others reduced) due to recent service reviews undertaken by ACTION, but no dedicated shuttle-type services linking Parkes-Barton and the city have been introduced.

2.3 PLANNING POLICY

Governance

Within the Australian Capital Territory, constitutional power ultimately rests with the Commonwealth. During most of the later half of 20th century, the Commonwealth's interests were articulated through the powerful National Capital Development Commission (NCDC). While retaining the core symbolic elements of Griffith's Plan the NCDC essentially locked in Canberra's unique metropolitan structure when it adopted the so called 'Y-Plan' in 1967. For around thirty years the NCDC retained responsibility for all aspects of the planning, design and development of the city, while lesser municipal functions were delegated to other Commonwealth departments of state. The city was effectively run as a Commonwealth Government entity to serve its National Capital functions.

In 1988, with the passage of Commonwealth legislation, the ACT Legislative Assembly was established and the Territory granted self-government. Its powers and responsibilities are similar to those of State and local government combined. The Commonwealth maintains responsibility for Canberra's role and functions as the National Capital. The primary instrument for doing so is through the *National Capital Plan* (National Capital Planning Authority, 1990) which is discussed in detail below.

Self government provided for the ACT Government to establish a Territory planning authority to develop and administer a separate but compatible Territory Plan. The object of the Territory Plan is to "ensure, in a manner not inconsistent with the National Capital Plan, the planning and development of the Territory to provide the people of the Territory with an attractive, safe and efficient environment in which to live and work and have their recreation." (National Capital Authority, 2000c, p 3). The Territory Plan is discussed in more detail below.

National Capital Plan

The *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* provides for continuing Commonwealth interest in planning and land management in the self governing Territory. The Act created the statutory framework and the division of responsibility between the two jurisdictions for the management of Commonwealth land in the ACT.

The Act provides for the establishment of the National Capital Authority, with responsibility for preparing and administering a National Capital Plan. The main objective of the Plan, which came into effect in 1990, is "to ensure that Canberra and the ACT are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance." (p 3)

The Plan defines planning principles and policies to effect the objective of the Plan, and sets standards for the maintenance and enhancement of the character of the National Capital and sets general standards and aesthetic principles to be adhered to in the development of the National Capital. The Plan sets out general policies of land use throughout the ACT, and general policies for planning the road systems. (see Figure 2.14 - the 'General Policy Plan' for a strategic overview of these provisions)

Access issues

The National Capital Plan acknowledges that "...the overall transport system comprises the road network, car parking facilities and public transport" (p 101). While the Plan provides for express transit linkages between the town centres, primarily to facilitate the journey to work, it does not play an active role in planning public transport or determining service levels. It is silent on the role that public transport plays in supporting National Capital functions such as facilitating appropriate access to public facilities and attractions.

The Plan focuses heavily on planning for 'national roads' (the links between Canberra and the major national highways and approach roads designed for symbolic, formal or National Capital purposes) and arterial roads (intra urban roads serving town centres; industrial centres; major retail centres and residential areas).

In contrast to roads, the policy guidance for public transport is minimal and very broad. It simply calls for the provision of public transport to "...keep pace with residential, commercial and industrial needs.." and "...aim to minimise the consumption of energy and to enhance the physical environment.." (pp 101-102) Responsibility is explicitly delegated to the ACT Government.

The only specific public transport initiative mentioned in the Plan is the requirement to reserve a right of way for a future public transport service "...to link major employment nodes.." at the town centres. (p 102) Such a link, if it is ever built, would by its nature serve a similar purpose to the existing express bus route which links the town centres at Belconnen - Civic - Woden - Tuggeranong. It is unlikely to confer major benefits to those wishing to access the main tourist and employment nodes within the Central National Area.

Central National Area

The Central National Area (CNA) is the centrepiece of the city which contains most of the elements, including the institutions, monuments and vistas that make up the National Capital. It comprises, inter alia, the Parliamentary Zone and its setting; Lake Burley Griffin and its Foreshores; the Australian War Memorial and Anzac Parade; the National Capital Exhibition at Regatta Point; and the National Museum of Australia site at Acton. (the entire CNA appears at Figure 2.15)

In the Plan's comprehensive coverage of the Central National Area (CNA), where most of the National Capital institutions and attractions are located, the issue of accessibility is not addressed.

Parliamentary Zone

Within the CNA, the Parliamentary Zone (Figure 2.16) is the triangular shaped precinct which contains Parliament House at its southern apex and is bounded by the Commonwealth and Kings Avenues, State Circle and Lake Burley Griffin to the north.

In its coverage of the Parliamentary Zone, the Plan describes this place reverentially as "...the physical manifestation of Australian democratic government and home of the nation's most important cultural and judicial institutions and symbols..[and]..the focal point of visitor interest.." (p 23) It also acknowledged accessibility as an emerging issue.

Access is taken up in its reference to the then current (1987) *Parliamentary Zone Development Plan*, (refer previous discussion at 2.2) which was prepared in response to the activity surrounding the imminent opening of Parliament House in 1988. One of the Development Plan's key principles was "...to improve transport and parking facilities in the expectation that the New Parliament House would generate one million visitors per year within five years of its opening in 1988 and to provide an appropriate range of consumer facilities (including recreational facilities) for an estimated 1990 daytime Zone population (workforce plus tourists) of 10,000-11,000 people." (National Capital Authority, 2000c, p 24)

The National Capital Plan itself, however, does not contain any specific directives to implement this recommendation.

Lake and foreshores

The Plan notes "Lake Burley Griffin is an integral part of the design of Canberra and is a vital and key element in the plan for the National Capital. The Lake is not only one of centrepieces of Canberra's plan in its own right but also forms the immediate foreground of the Parliamentary Zone." Further, the Plan seeks "...a well defined system of lakeside drives, park access roads and public transport access..." for both residents and tourists. (p 29)

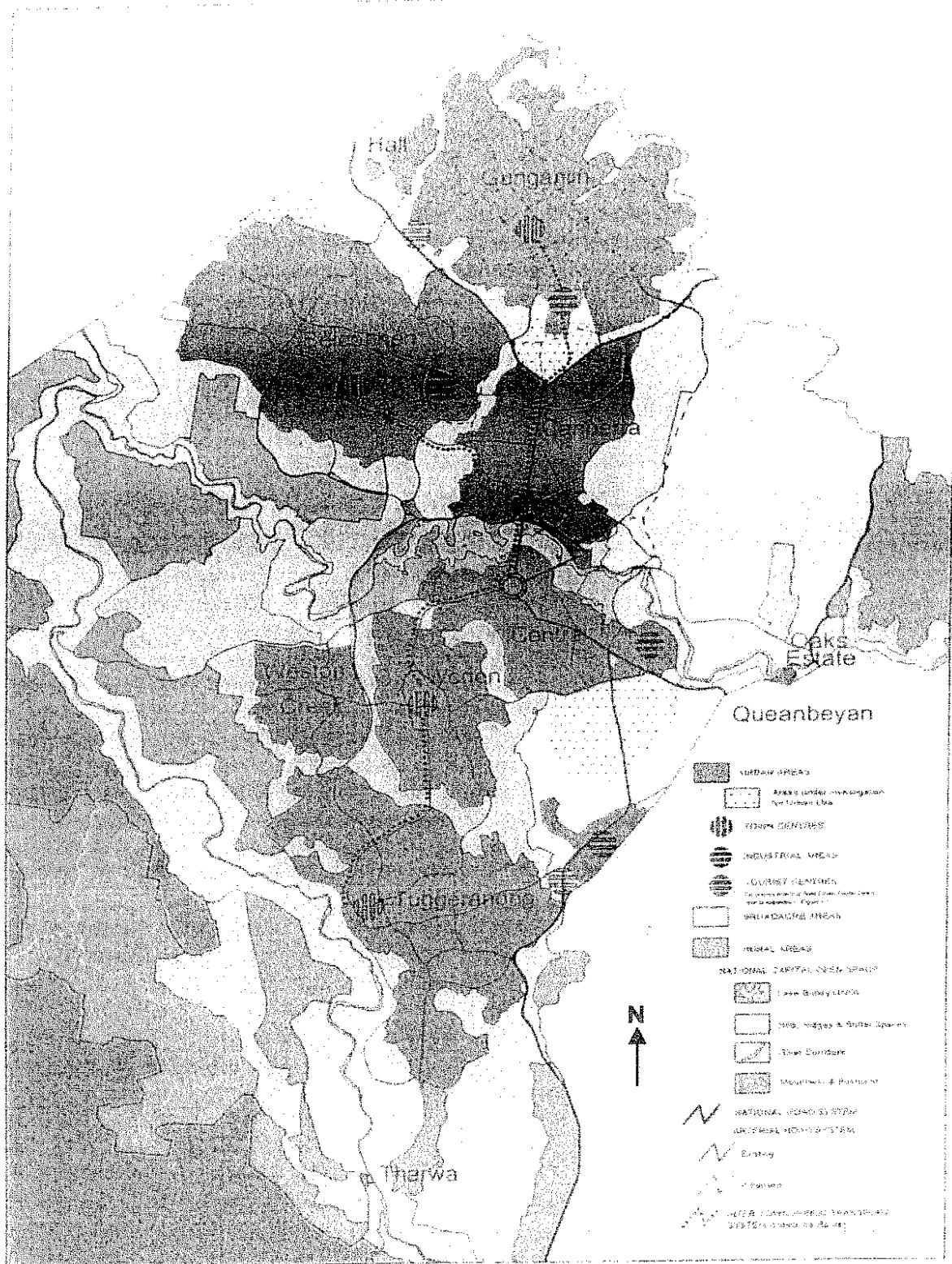
The Plan calls for ferry services linking the Parliamentary Zone and other tourist nodes as desirable but concedes that commercial viability would be the determining factor. (p 30) To date, despite the range of vessels operating none offers a reliable scheduled Lake crossing service.

Under Section 1.4 of the Plan, which provides the Detailed Conditions of Planning, Design and Development in the CNA, access is primarily considered in terms of roads:

"...traffic capacity and traffic arrangements on major routes ...will be planned to ensure safe and dignified access for all ceremonial occasions, and for residents, staff, tourist and visitors"; and

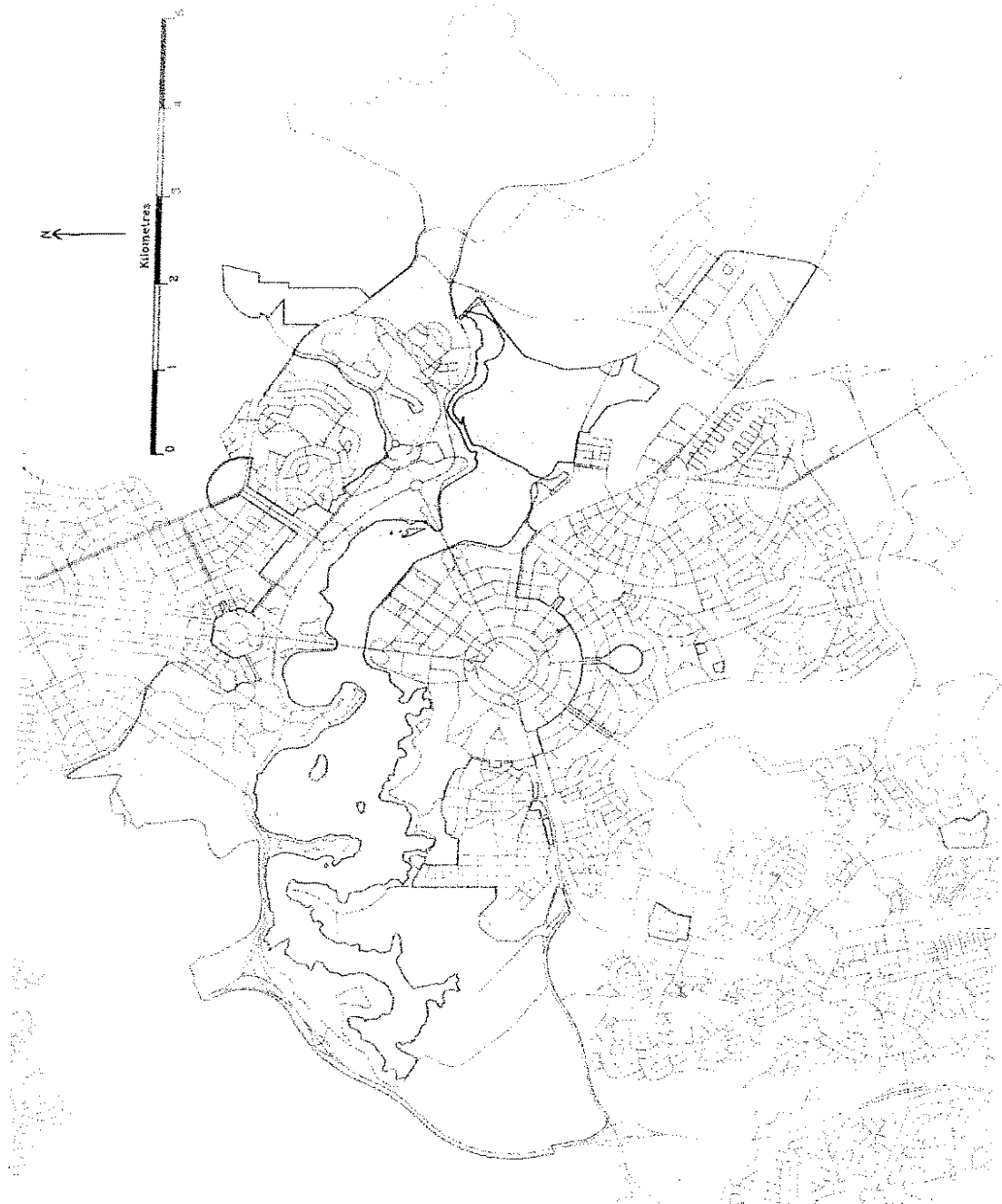
"the transport system ...will be planned and managed for volumes of traffic and parking consistent with the significance and use of the Area. Transport infrastructure should foster the use of transport systems which minimise adverse effects from vehicular traffic." (p 32)

Figure 2.14 General Policy Plan – National Capital Plan



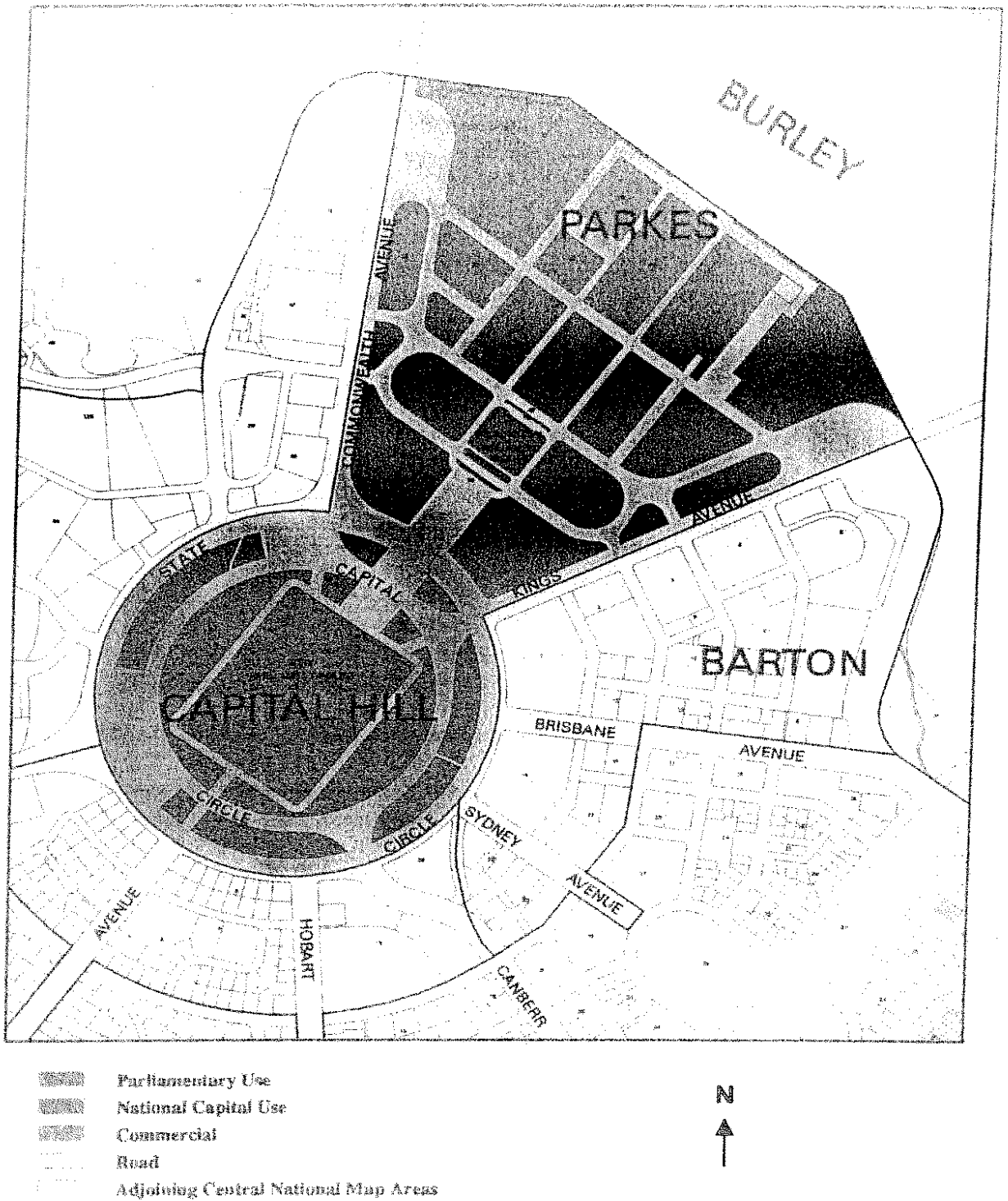
Source: National Capital Plan (2000)

Figure 2.15 Central National Area



Source: National Capital Authority (2001)

Figure 2.16 Parliamentary Zone



Source: National Capital Plan (2000) Figure 5

Exactly what the final statement means is unclear. It might be advocating the use of public transport but if that is so, it would seem to be at odds with the immediately preceding statements and is not backed by any specific policy initiatives. This uncertainty may be a matter that the forthcoming National Capital Plan Review (National Capital Authority, 1999a) might clarify.

Employment location

This section of the Plan comments on the emerging traffic and parking problems which were being experienced in the CNA as a result of rapid growth and concentration of employment during the 1980s. In response, the Plan sought to limit Commonwealth office location in Civic and encourage additional development of the town centres, particularly in Belconnen and Tuggeranong. However, the Plan permits those "...Commonwealth Departments and agencies requiring close working relationships with the Executive and the Parliament.." to locate in the Parliamentary Zone at Parkes and the adjacent suburb of Barton. (p 78)

This provision has influenced the relocation of some very significant Commonwealth employers such as the Departments of the Environment and Conservation; and Finance and Administration away from Civic and into the Parliamentary Zone. Oddly, no commuter access policies were developed to support these moves - with the result that moving the employment from Civic, with its superior public transport links, to a much more car dependent location has adversely impacted modal choice.

Environmental Issues

A short, general statement calling for the city's planning to "...reflect national and international concerns for efficient use of energy and effective responses on the Greenhouse effect" and for "sustainable development" is included in the Plan. (p 131)

There are no specific policies to link these principles with the emerging transport issues and outcomes.

Analysis

The National Capital Plan provides little policy guidance for non-vehicular access to the Central National Area of Canberra. It appears to assume visitors and commuters will generally use the ample road system and freely available car parking. The Plan seems to view public transport as a supplement required to support the road system when it is under most pressure - the journey to and from work, rather than an integral element of the city's mobility infrastructure. It may be that part of the reason for the Plan's lack of focus on public transport generally is that responsibility for its operation rests with the Territory Government.

Despite the acknowledgment that accessibility was an emerging issue with the expected influx of commuters and tourists associated with the opening of the new Parliament House in 1988, and the preparation of a Development Plan which included some transport initiatives, its implementation faltered.

With continuing growth of visitor and commuter pressures over the past decade, coupled with the significant number of new attractions under construction or planned for the CNA, the Plan will need to address access issues as priority. To ensure the success of initiatives such as the Parliamentary Zone's 'place of the people' it will be essential that enhanced accessibility is a key term of reference when reviewing the National Capital Plan.

Territory Plan

The *Territory Plan* (ACT Planning Authority, 1993) is administered by the ACT Government. It is subordinate to, and supplements the overarching strategic policy framework set by the National Capital Plan. It does not apply to those areas identified in the National Capital Plan as having 'national significance'. In general terms the Territory Plan provides detailed guidance for planning, design and development in all areas outside the jurisdiction of the National Capital Plan. Figure 2.17 - ACT Metropolitan Structure illustrates how the Territory Plan mirrors the broad policy context of the National Capital Plan (as shown at Figure 2.14).

The Territory Plan (TP), therefore, has negligible influence in terms of land use policies in Canberra's Central National Area.

In the section 'Planning Principles and Policies' the TP asserts "...that the ACT must be planned as both the setting of the National Capital and a community in its own right. Accordingly, the Planning Principles and Policies contained in the Territory Plan are intended to complement and apply concurrently with those contained in the National Capital Plan, whilst emphasising the somewhat different purposes of the Territory Plan." (p 5)

Specific policy guidance regarding accessibility is limited. Under 'Transport and Access' the TP "...recognises the essential linkages between land use and transport planning. It meets continuing needs for an adequate road network, including extension of the peripheral parkway systems to minimise traffic on internal road systems through town centres and residential areas. The Plan also seeks to promote public transport and energy efficiency.

Particular emphasis is placed on maximising the potential use of an inter-town public transport system (ITP)." (p 11) (The ITP is also referred to in the NCP and currently operates as the express bus service which links Belconnen, Civic, Woden and Tuggeranong town centres.)

The TP asserts "planning for land use and transport will be closely inter-related in order to enhance the efficiency of the transport system, limit traffic congestion, promote safety, support the desired pattern of development, reduce energy consumption and safeguard environmental quality" (p 11) but does not say how this will be achieved.

It goes on to state "roads will be planned on a hierarchical basis related to the traffic movement, road safety and land use access functions they serve. Local and through traffic will be separated as far as possible." (p 11)

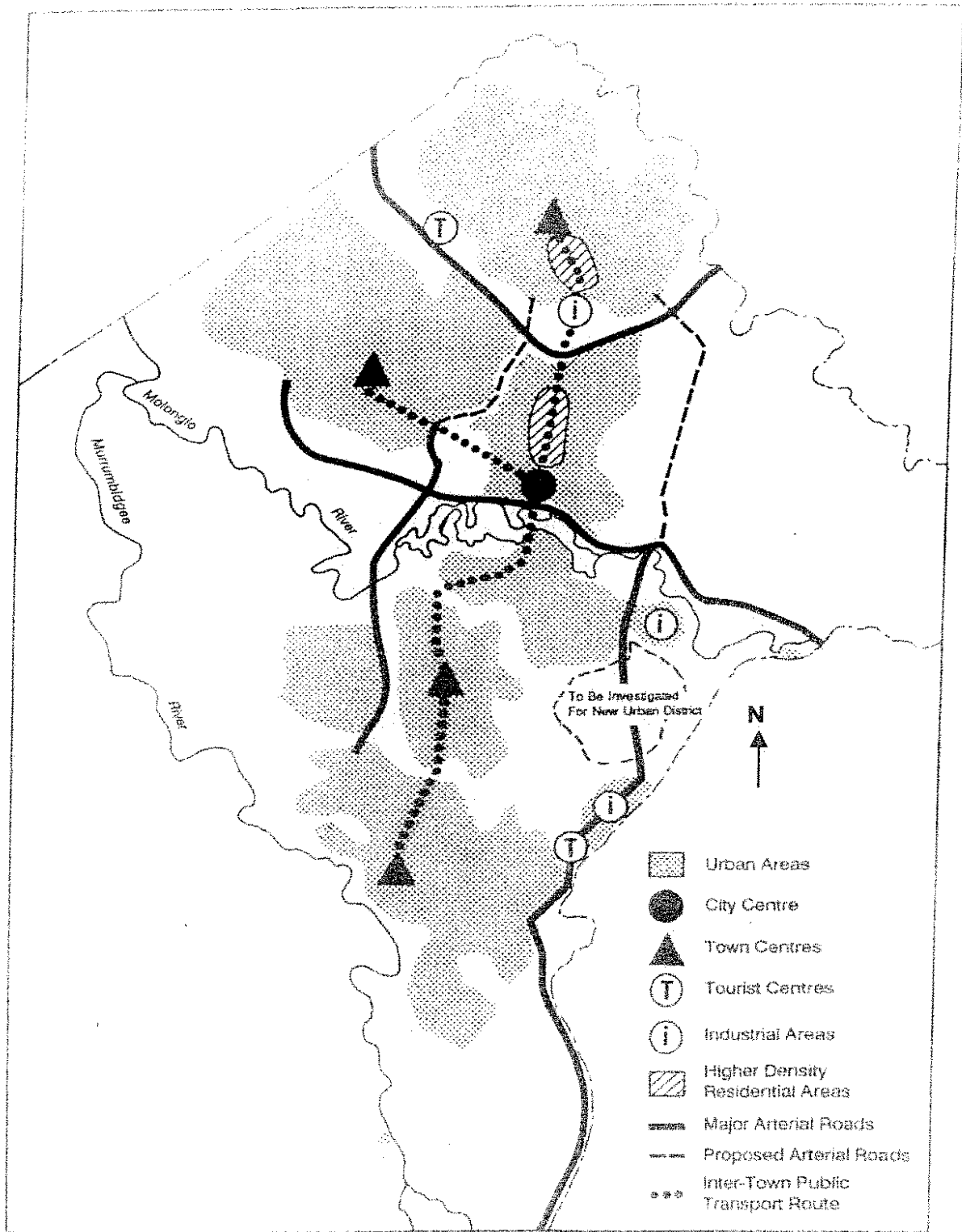
The only significant acknowledgment of the alternative transport is made in the following provision. "Development will be planned so as to promote the use of public transport and create opportunities for walking and cycling, including commuter cycling. The existing pedestrian and cycleway system will be progressively extended, whilst routes will be reserved for both an inter-town public transport system (ITP) and, if required, an interstate fast rail link." (p 11)

Analysis

It is acknowledged that the Territory Plan has no jurisdiction in the Commonwealth controlled Central National Area and is therefore silent on issues pertaining this area.

In the broader metropolitan context, the TP's transport planning policy, appears to be largely based on the generic policy statements contained in the NCP, and therefore of insufficient detail to provide substantive further policy guidance.

Figure 2.17 Territory Plan - Metropolitan Structure



Source: Territory Plan (1993) p7

ACT and Sub-Region Planning Strategy

The *ACT and Sub-Region Planning Strategy* (ACT Chief Minister's Department, 1998) was developed as a tool to help guide regional growth and change in and around the National Capital. Unlike the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan it is not a statutory document which binds its participants. Rather, it was developed as a partnership approach which provides "...an umbrella policy framework to guide the actions of key players, whether governments, business or the community at large, for a regional population of between 450,000 and 500,000 people to 2023." (p v)

All three spheres of participating government (Commonwealth, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and local Councils) have, however accepted the Strategy as the basis for their future decision making.

The area covered by the Strategy incorporates all the ACT and extends into surrounding local government jurisdictions, including the cities of Queanbeyan and Yass (Figure 2.18). In general terms the ACT and Sub-Region extends beyond the ACT borders to a distance of about 40 minutes commuting time from Canberra.

The Strategy places significant emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the region's environmental quality and "...adopts the objectives and guiding principles of ecologically sustainable development as an over-arching commitment." (p 3)

In terms of its specific application to transport and access issues, the Strategy includes a chapter entitled *Settlement* in which the final 'strategic principle for settlement' is "Consolidated development and increased public transport usage should be promoted in order to reduce energy consumption and minimise requirements for additional urban lands." (p 24) Apart from a suggested 'action' of reviewing the metropolitan structure of Canberra-Queanbeyan (p 27), no further guidance is offered on how this would be achieved.

The following chapter, *Infrastructure*, includes 'strategic principles' supporting the continuing role of roads as the region's primary transport system; and the possibility of fast rail links and the expansion of Canberra Airport to play a more important role as a regional hub and rail interchange point. The principles also include a call for "an integrated public transport system...for the Canberra-Queanbeyan metropolitan area...which should be promoted as an environmental preferable alternative to private motor vehicles." (p 28)

The relevant 'actions' listed for the chapter include numerous specific road works (shown at Figure 2.19) but the initiatives for public transport are vague. It calls for the investigation of "...new arrangements for coordination across the ACT/NSW border amongst public transport authorities and agencies for funding community transport schemes" and the "integration of community transport schemes with community services" as well as a general statement to "encourage improved integration of air, rail, bus and road transport with urban, town and village settlements." (p 29)

These so called actions for public transport raise more questions than answers. For example, it fails to explain the difference, if there is any, between public transport and community transport. There is no explanation of the supposed linkages between a community transport scheme and a community service. Further, there is no discussion as to what problems these initiatives are trying to solve, nor who should be responsible.

The strategy for promoting tourism and recreation (p 33) essentially ignores the needs of non-car based tourism. While its recommendations acknowledge the need for generic infrastructure such as information centres, maps and signage, there is no discussion of issues facing visitors without vehicles.

Figure 2.16 ACT and Sub-Region

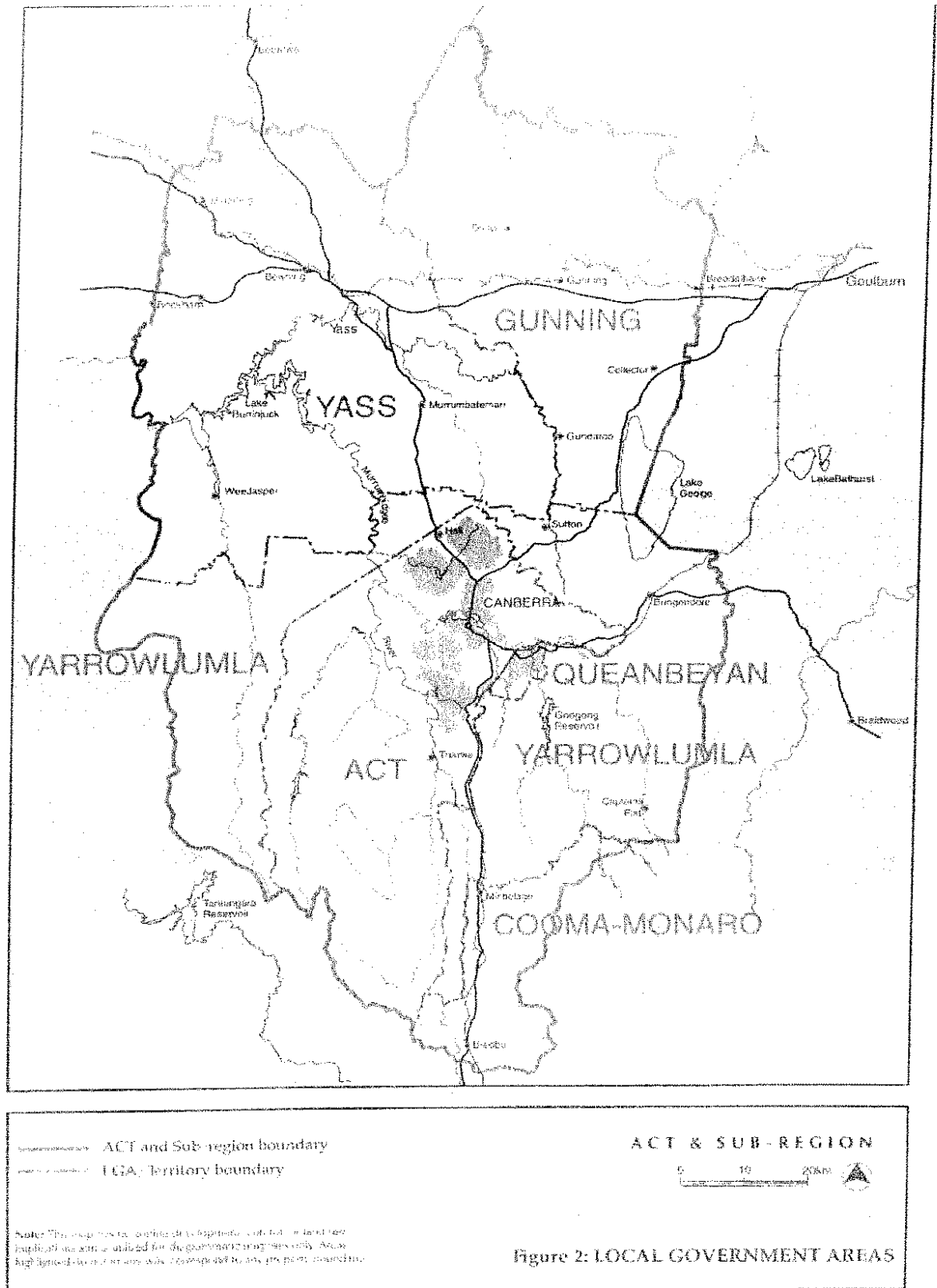
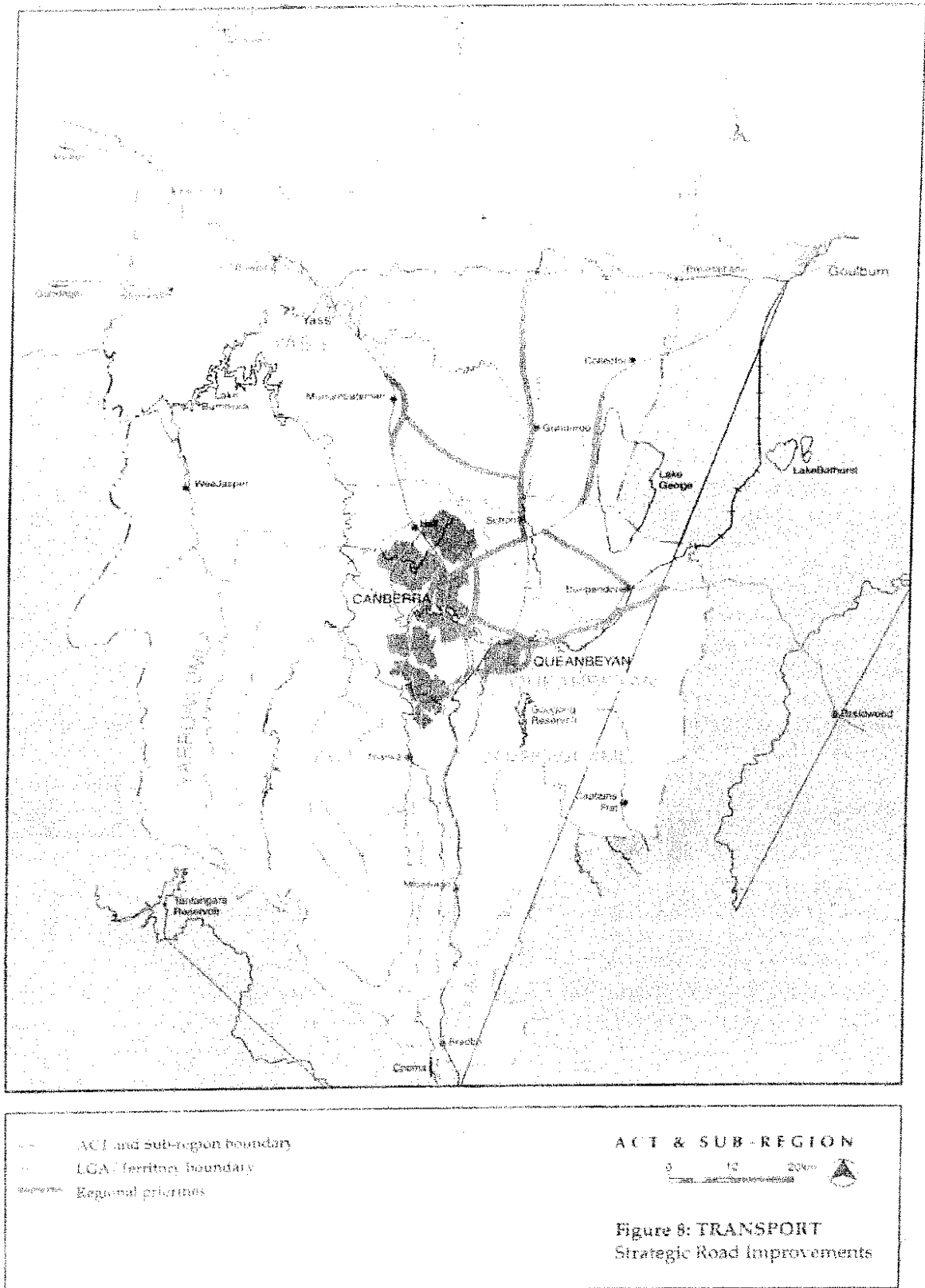


Figure 2: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

Source: ACT Chief Minister's Department (1998) p 4

Figure 2.19 ACT and Sub-Region Planning Strategy – Road Initiatives



Source: ACT Chief Minister's Department (1998) p 30

Analysis

On the basis of the inadequate and incomprehensible recommendations, the Strategy offers no substantive guidance in terms of transport planning policy for central Canberra.

The document, along with the other key planning policy documents reviewed, is perhaps indicative of the awareness deficit concerning the needs of that significant segment of the population which does not have access to a car.

Transport Planning Policies

Neither the Commonwealth nor Territory Governments have specific transport planning policies in place for the Central National Area.

The Commonwealth Transport portfolio maintains a policy role in national transport issues only. Currently, the portfolio does not appear to be developing policy or programs associated with public transport. This responsibility now rests entirely with the State and Territory or local government jurisdictions. The Commonwealth Environment portfolio, however, maintains an interest through its policies for reducing Greenhouse gas emissions, etc which is reviewed in the following section 2.4.

The ACT Government has, as part of its response to Greenhouse gas emission abatement, prepared a discussion paper arguing for greater integration of land use and transport planning. It too, is reviewed in the following section 2.4.

2.4 ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD)

The *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992) was adopted by the Council of Australian Governments in 1992 in response to the global environmental agenda set in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development's *Our Common Future* (the Brundtland Report). This report identified the potentially catastrophic impacts that unchecked human activity, particularly in respect to depleting natural resources, was having on the long term sustainability of the world's ecosystems.

The National Strategy for ESD was formulated following an extensive consultation process involving industry sector-based working groups. All spheres of government in Australia made a commitment to the principles of ESD by signing the Inter-Governmental Agreement on the Environment in 1992. The National Strategy defined ESD in Australia as:

“using, conserving, and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now, and in the future, can be increased.” (p 6)

More specifically, the National Strategy offered a series of principles to guide the achievement of sustainability:

- decision making processes should effectively integrate both long and short term economic, environmental, social and equity considerations;
- where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation;

- the global dimension of environmental impacts of actions and policies should be recognised and considered;
- the need to develop a strong, growing and diversified economy which can enhance international competitiveness in an environmentally sound manner should be recognised;
- cost effective and flexible policy instruments should be adopted, such as improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms;
- decisions and actions should provide for broad community involvement on issues which affect them. (p 8)

The National Strategy and the Inter-Governmental Agreement together provide the framework for sector-specific responses, including transport.

In a reference to the trend towards highly car dependent urban development and mobility patterns, and the then emerging issue of greenhouse gas emissions, the National Strategy signals the need for the "...adoption of a more co-ordinated approach to urban and transport development and improvement in government planning coordination" and "...development of urban transport systems which provide opportunities to limit the use of fossil fuels." (pp 40-41)

To achieve these objectives Governments are instructed to:

- upgrade urban public transport systems; improve service quality; and better integrate and coordinate the different transport modes,
- develop and implement travel demand strategies and management techniques (including parking taxes) to slow the rise private vehicle use; and
- integrate land use and transport planning to discourage development which is fossil fuel dependent. (pp 41-42)

Although doubts have been raised concerning the effectiveness of the National Strategy for ESD in delivering enhanced environmental outcomes (see, for example, Mitchell, 1999; Diesendorf & Hamilton, 1997), and contemporary economic policies, particularly tax reform, appear to be in conflict with ESD (Diesendorf, 2000), the strategy remains an integral element of Australian environmental policy.

The Commonwealth Government's new *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 2000*, for example, embraces the principles of ESD. The legislation, which came into effect on 16 July 2000, includes a specific objective "to promote ecologically sustainable development through the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources" (Environment Australia, 1999, p 3) The Act also provides for all Commonwealth agencies to report annually on the implementation of this objective within their areas of responsibility.

The Strategy for ESD, particularly its recommendations involving transport, have also been especially influential in determining public policy responses to limit climate change associated with Greenhouse gas emissions (see below).

It is therefore appropriate to acknowledge that the proposal to improve transit access to the Canberra's Central National Area would be totally in accordance with the objectives and recommendations of the National Strategy for ESD.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Strategy

Both Commonwealth and ACT Governments have policies in place to limit the risks of global climate change due to increased greenhouse gas emissions.

In summary, a 'greenhouse effect' occurs when radiant energy from the sun reaches the earth's surface and warms it. Some of the heat is re-radiated back into space but some is absorbed by the so-called greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, keeping the lower levels of the atmosphere considerably warmer than the upper levels. The greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon that keeps the earth's surface at a temperature suitable for life.

The balance of scientific evidence suggests that an increasing level of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere from human activities are leading to an enhanced greenhouse effect. This in turn has the potential to lead to global warming, climate change and long-term changes to the environment, which could impact negatively on human and other life on the planet.

The main damage-causing greenhouse gases influenced by human activity are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Carbon-dioxide, the largest contributor to enhanced greenhouse effect, is estimated to be about 30 per cent greater in atmospheric concentration than 200 years ago. The burning of fossil fuels and land clearing are the main causes of these increases. (Environment ACT, 1999, p 1)

As a signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which came into effect in 1994, Australia committed itself to lowering its greenhouse emissions. The Convention provides for detailed implementation and reporting of policies and measures to an annual Conference of the Parties (COP). The latest COP was held in Kyoto in 1997 which developed a Protocol requiring countries to collectively reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of five per cent below 1990 levels by the period 2008-2012. Within this target individual nations agreed to differentiated targets ranging from an eight per cent reduction to a ten per cent increase, depending on their particular economic circumstances and capacity to make emissions reductions. At Kyoto, Australia committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to no more than eight per cent above 1990 levels (noting that the Kyoto Protocol remains to be ratified by a majority of participants).

Although Australia only contributes about one per cent of total global greenhouse gas emissions, its per capita emissions are among the highest in the world. This is largely due to Australia's heavy reliance on fossil fuel based energy needs; highly energy intensive industries; relatively high population growth; and transport needs related to the dispersed settlement patterns.

These factors underlie current projections which suggest Australia is unlikely to be able to slow its growth in greenhouse gas emissions for some time. In fact, a 'do nothing' approach would result in emissions growing by some 28 per cent between 1990 and 2010. To meet the Kyoto Protocol target of an eight per cent increase by 2010, average annual reductions of two per cent would be required.

National Greenhouse Strategy

Largely in response to the much more stringent approach adopted by the global community in Kyoto, the Commonwealth, States and Territory Governments revised earlier joint policy approaches to climate change to endorse a new *National Greenhouse Strategy*. (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998)

The National Greenhouse Strategy (NGS) provides the strategic framework and outlines actions required to achieve its objective of reducing emissions. It acknowledges the need

for an holistic approach with partnerships between governments, business and the community; and that regional diversity will necessitate some differing policy approaches between jurisdictions. In respect to the latter, the ACT Government has been the first of the States and Territories to produce a detailed implementation plan for the measures contained in the NGS. The ACT's response is discussed in detail below.

According to the recently released National Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 1998, total greenhouse emissions (excluding emissions from land clearing) reached 455.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent - a 5.2 per cent increase over 1997 and 16.9 per cent rise in emissions since 1990.

The second largest contributor to emissions, after the energy production sector, is the transport sector, which accounted for 15.9 per cent of total emissions in 1998, a rise of 0.3 per cent over 1997 and 18.1 per cent above those recorded in 1990.

Overall, cars contribute 9 per cent of all emissions (some 56 per cent of transport sector emissions) and were responsible for a 16.6 per cent rise in emissions from 1990 to 1998. (National Greenhouse Office, 2000, p 1)

Emissions from the transport sector are the fastest growing of all sectors. Each litre of petrol consumed by a car produces about 2.5 kilograms of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide equivalents); while each litre of diesel produces almost 3 kilograms of greenhouse gases. (Australian Consumer's Association, 2000, p 30) Despite improvements in the fuel efficiency of passenger vehicles and greater use of greenhouse friendly LPG for fuel, the increasing numbers of vehicles and distances travelled are contributing to total emissions growth. (National Greenhouse Office, 2000, p 3) Citing research by the Bureau of Transport Economics, projections show that without reduction measures, emissions from the transport sector will rise by 42 per cent between 1994 and 2015. (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998, p 55)

To meet Kyoto Protocol emission targets, significant reductions will be required. The NGS identifies a series of specific actions relating to urban planning and transport which aim to arrest greenhouse emissions. The Strategy notes that these measures may also contribute to other broader government economic, environmental and social policy objectives such as reducing business costs (through reduced traffic congestion and fuel costs); more efficient use of infrastructure (both existing and planned); improvements in urban air quality, improved access to public transport and community facilities; and more sustainable land use. (p 55) The Strategy goes on to make a series of specific recommendations which have application in the context of improving access to the National Capital:

Integrating land use and transport planning

Citing conclusions made by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, the NGS notes that:

"changes in urban and transport infrastructure to reduce the need for motorised transport and shift demand to less energy-intensive transport modes, may be among the most important elements of a long term strategy for greenhouse gas mitigation in the transport sector. In some circumstances, the resulting traffic reductions can result in greenhouse gas emission reductions of 10 per cent or more by 2020, while obtaining broad social and environmental benefits." (p 56)

Travel demand and traffic management

The NGS encourages modified travel behaviour, including reduced car usage, through

initiatives such as reduced commuter parking; preferential parking locations, fees and conditions for high occupancy vehicles; commuter parking fees to reduce demand; and congestion pricing. (p 59)

Encouraging greater use of public transport, walking and cycling

Substitution of public transport, cycling or walking for car-based travel reduces greenhouse gas emissions. The Strategy calls for the development of integrated public transport plans "...which are responsive to customer demands, particularly through improvements to service reliability, comfort and personal safety; service frequencies; vehicle mixes tailored to demands; fare payment options; and provision of clear and accurate customer information;" (p 60)

The NGS also flagged the establishment of a new forum (possibly under the Australian Transport Council) to examine emerging transport modes and technologies and their application to Australian urban environments. The forum would have joint Commonwealth and State/Territory representation with inputs from the private sector and research institutions. (p 61)

Improving vehicle fuel efficiency and fuel technologies

Although primarily aimed at encouraging improved fuel efficiency and promoting the use of alternative fuels of lower greenhouse intensity (such as compressed natural gas and blended alcohol) in cars, this measure also has application to public transport vehicles. (p 63)

Analysis

Although relatively broad in their scope, the policies and more specific measures relating urban planning and transport outlined in the NGS, are consistent with any proposal to provide enhanced public transport in the CNA.

The recent release of national greenhouse gas emission statistics for 1998, which showed that Australia's emissions have continued to grow and were some 16.9 per cent above 1990 levels are very concerning. With increasing world pressure to meet Kyoto Protocol targets, the Commonwealth Government may be prompted to broaden the scope of response initiatives that it will fund within the transport sector to include targeted or demonstration programs for urban public transport systems.

ACT Greenhouse Strategy

In early 2000 the ACT Government launched a program for reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the publication of a comprehensive strategy document. *The ACT Greenhouse Strategy* (Environment ACT, 1999) complements the measures adopted in the National Greenhouse Strategy (NGS) and identifies specific initiatives to be undertaken by the Territory. It sets 'an ambitious target' to stabilise ACT emissions at 1990 levels by 2008 and then reduce these emissions by a further 20 per cent by 2018. (Environment ACT, 1999, p iii)

Although the ACT is a minor contributor to total national greenhouse gas emissions, the Territory Government contends, commendably, that it has a responsibility, as the National Capital, to display leadership in reducing Australia's emissions. (p iii)

The ACTGS notes that in 1990, greenhouse gas emissions in the ACT were in the order of 3,900 Gg (thousand tonnes) of carbon dioxide equivalent. Between 1990 and 1997 this figure increased by 9.2 per cent to 4,257 Gg. In common with the national position, the principal source of emissions in 1997 was electricity generation (for power consumed in the ACT), representing about 53 per cent of total emissions. The transport sector has the

second highest level of emissions at 22 per cent. (p ix)

Like the NGS, the ACTGS provides for sectoral based policies and initiatives, including the transport sector. It also provides cross references to other ACT Government policies with greenhouse gas implications, in particular, its *Integrated Land Use and Transport Strategy*. This draft policy is reviewed in more detail later in the chapter.

In respect to the transport sector, the ACTGS sets out the following broad objective:

“To modify Canberra’s urban form and transport system to reduce travel demand, to promote switching to transport modes which produce less greenhouse gas emissions, and to improve the fuel efficiency of the ACT’s vehicle fleet.” (p 21)

The ACT’s transport sector accounts for a much higher (almost 22 per cent) proportion of greenhouse emissions than what is attributable to the sector nationally (16 per cent). While this is partly due to the smaller industrial and agricultural sectors in the Territory, the Strategy also suggests that the “...decentralised urban structure and Canberra’s low population density have created a high dependency on private motor vehicles for transport and a high level of vehicle travel relative to other Australian cities...” (p 11)

Of particular concern is the finding that transport emissions in the ACT grew by an average of 2.7 per cent annually between 1990 and 1997. This is the fastest growth of any sector and “...nearly twice the rate of increase in total emissions”. (p 8)

With the ACTGS reporting that, on average, some 86 per cent of trips to work and study in the ACT are made by using a private car and only 6 per cent made by public transport, the task to effect any significant mode change, and therefore reduce emissions, will be very difficult. Further, it acknowledges that some of the features of the Commonwealth’s new tax system may actually lead to increased emissions. For example the price of new cars has fallen but public transport fares have increased with the GST. (p 9)

The ACTGS puts forward a range of transport related measures to enable the Territory to meet its reduced emissions targets. (p 22) Regrettably, the level of commitment towards enhancing the public transport system is poor. For example, a significant omission is the lack of an integrated public transport plan (as proposed in the National Greenhouse Strategy) which should form the basis of reducing car dependency. Those ACTGS initiatives which are relevant to this project are listed below. Most are not known to have progressed to implementation phase, although some elaboration is made where appropriate.

- The ACTGS supported the introduction of the new (1999) bus network and timetable offering a 20 per cent increase in services, new through routes and new fare structures which were estimated to increase passenger trips by 14 per cent by 2002.

Despite achieving a five per cent increase in patronage in the twelve months following the introduction of the new network (and reversing the dramatic falls of previous years) the ACT Government announced service cuts effective from 31 January 2000. It claimed that because its (previously undisclosed) target of an 8 per cent rise in patronage was not met, the new service levels could not be sustained. Officials also claimed that the impact of the GST and subsequent increased affordability of private cars worked against a realisation of projected patronage increases. (Canberra Times, 2000a, p 2) Weekday and weekend services were subsequently cut by 14 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. (Canberra Times, 2000b, p C7).

Clearly, the ACTGS target to increase public transport patronage by 14 per cent by 2002 was severely undermined by the lack of commitment to fund new services.

- Improved traffic management techniques through the establishment of bus and taxi only lanes, bus priority lanes and transit lanes.

Despite the urgent need to implement such measures in key locations where buses are delayed, such as Northbourne Avenue, no action has been taken.

- A proposal to review the ACT taxi industry to examine "flexible alternatives to facilitate car and taxi sharing". (p 22) (The exact nature of this proposal remains unclear)
- An assessment of efficient, reliable and flexible public transport alternatives between the proposed Canberra Airport/fast rail terminal to town centres and chief tourist sites.

It is assumed that this assessment will not be progressed until after construction of the fast rail proposal has been confirmed. The 1999 ACTION network improvements noted above introduced (and subsequently withdrew) a new bus link between Civic and the airport. The transit system proposed in this project could be extended and adapted to perform this service.

- Encouraging use of public transport through the provision of 'Park and Ride' facilities at key centres;
- Introduce a 'travel blending' program to better plan and monitor vehicle use. (The exact nature of this proposal remains unclear)
- Establish a travel activity database to assist in planning for future travel needs;
- Review the feasibility of introducing electronic road pricing;
- Providing tax/payroll incentives that permit employers to issue vouchers for public transport use by employees;
- Develop a parking policy which will encourage alternative modes of transport.

The Strategy also provides a number of planning and infrastructure related initiatives. These include proposals to better integrate land use and transport planning (see below); promoting cycling; and reducing trip demand through greater use of electronic (online) service delivery. (p 22)

Analysis

While the Strategy acknowledges that reduced car dependency and greater use of alternative travel modes, including public transport, will be important in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the measures proposed appear ad hoc in nature and unlikely to effect significant change.

The Strategy's objectives would, however, be well served by any enhancement to the public transport system, together with the introduction of more equitable pricing measures for road access and parking. Some of these issues are taken up in ILUTP, below.

Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning (ILUTP)

The *Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning in the ACT* (ACT Department of Urban Services, 1999) is a discussion paper prepared by the Territory Government as part of its policy response to the transport component of the National Greenhouse Strategy. It acknowledges that integrating land use and transport planning can assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The ILUTP paper notes that the ACT Government has endorsed the National Greenhouse Strategy and is actively participating in the National Greenhouse Strategy Implementation Plan. Measure 5.2 of the National Greenhouse Strategy is 'Integrating land use and transport planning' and Measure 5.3 is 'Promoting best practice in land use and transport planning', with the objectives of:

- more sustainable urban forms and transport systems;
- reduced need for car based travel; and
- reduced greenhouse emissions.

The ACT is also progressing the development of an integrated transport investment framework (Measure 5.4) which will complement the integrated land use and transport initiatives.

The paper argues generically for strategies which promote higher density residential development along with retailing, office and other employment nodes near public transport. Specifically, it reports that the ACT Government is actively encouraging development which is focussed on "public transport spines and nodes" such as along Northbourne Avenue and in Civic and a strong hierarchy of town centres which serve as significant trip destinations (ACT DUS, 1999, p 3). The paper is silent on the Parliamentary Zone and the other main locations with Commonwealth activities.

In the section entitled *Guiding Principles* the paper acknowledges Canberra's significance as the National Capital and its "world class heritage of planning" (p 7). It goes on to promote Canberra's importance as a model city in terms of its environmental management and to seek reductions in energy and material consumption, greenhouse emissions and pollutants.

The section also acknowledges 'accessibility' as a key principle in the paper. It argues that services and facilities should be available to the whole community and that all forms of movement - whether walking; cycling; public transport or driving should be 'easy and accessible' (p 8). It suggests a preferred hierarchy of modes:

- walking
- cycling
- public transport
- commercial vehicles
- private cars

It nominates walking to be a preferred mode for short trips and that public areas be safe and convenient for pedestrians.

Cycling is promoted as a 'valid transport mode'. While this may at first seem at odds with the fact that the city is renowned for its city-wide, high quality, cycling infrastructure and relatively high mode share, the fact remains that the arterial road system can be a very unfriendly environment for cyclists.

The section on public transport is, regrettably, a series of vague and 'motherhood' statements which fail to give policy makers the necessary direction required to implement a useful transport system.

The principles listed in the paper call for public transport to:

- "provide a high level of service which is cost effective" (p 8) - which, without further

explanation or benchmarks, is meaningless;

- put in place “public transport infrastructure ahead of demand to establish usage patterns” (p 8) - which presumably requires subsidy and may therefore conflict with the cost effectiveness goal listed in the first statement and conflicts starkly with the recent ACTION service reductions;
- keep under review “alternative .. technologies, which may have the potential to deliver improved levels of service at less cost” (p 8) - but does not elaborate on what these may be; and
- “comply with the Disability Discrimination Act” to ensure mobility impaired passengers are catered for. (p 8)

These principles offer no clear understanding as to what is required, what benchmarks are to apply (for example to achieve a set market share of modal split; time-frames for achievement; the sources of funding and cost recovery expectations; or identify responsibilities and lines of reporting; etc.

Oddly, for a paper purporting to encourage reduced greenhouse emissions, it states that the “role of the private motor vehicle as a superior mode for many types of trips should be recognised” (p 8). It does, however, advocate the application of “incentives and cost penalties” (without further elaboration) to encourage mode shift from private vehicles to the other modes; the use of more fuel efficient vehicles; and discourages the construction of major roads ahead of demand.

The section on ‘Land Development’ highlights the role of Civic as “the city’s heart” (p 9), but it effectively ignores the growing importance of the Central National Area, particularly the Parliamentary Zone, and the need to better integrate these areas with Civic and into wider metropolitan functioning more generally.

It overlooks the fact that of the total 130,000 jobs in metropolitan Canberra, about 70,000 are located in the inner north and south, largely in the CNA. Only about 25 per cent of these central area jobs are in Civic with its superior public transport accessibility. (p 16)

It calls for “major land development proposals...to be designed and located to achieve a net reduction in ...public transport cost and to minimise increases in private motor vehicle travel” (p 9), yet is silent on the continuing concentration of new employment development in the CNA which, due to its poor public transport access, has encouraged a very high degree of car dependence.

The ILUTP paper goes on to provide details of the high costs of providing public transport in the city (through the ACTION bus system). The service runs at a considerable deficit, and a significant proportion of this relates to community service obligations. There is no discussion of how patronage (particularly of high yield, full fare passengers) may be increased or the services made more attractive to better serve new and emerging market segments such as visiting tourists.

Car parking policy is acknowledged as an important element in determining mode share to a destination. Both the availability and cost of parking can directly influence public transport usage. However, citing the example of Civic, where there is an oversupply of parking and that the majority of it is privately owned, the paper asserts that the Government’s ability to influence demand, through higher pricing or reducing supply, would be hampered by the transfer of demand to the private parking sector rather than public transport. (p 12) It does not, however, canvass options, similar to those practiced in other Australian cities such as Sydney and Perth, where governments place an annual levy on all parking spaces within defined areas as a transport management (and revenue) tool.

There is no discussion of the potential for mode change (and revenue potential) across the much wider Central National Area with its considerable employment and visitor markets for public transport.

The paper concludes with a discussion of what it describes as the "third phase" of the city's development. It places great emphasis on becoming "economically self-sustaining" as well as working "towards being genuinely ecologically sustainable." (p 13)

It suggests, rather simplistically, that by using urban planning and development processes to guide new developments to locate adjacent to public transport routes, the city can encourage greater use of public transport. (p 13)

It refers to commercial developments locating in Civic, the town and group centres, but ignores the major employment growth that has, and continues to occur, in Barton, Forrest, Fyshwick and the Airport. (p 13) It ignores the significant role the Commonwealth has in ACT planning and the influences it exerts through its employment generation and large landholdings.

Further, the paper makes the apparent contradictory assertion that parking and vehicle access will continue to be provided to meet the needs of development consistent with traffic and pedestrian safety, efficiency and environmental sustainability. While it signals a review of the Commercial Land Use Policy in the Territory Plan "to reflect this direction" (p 14), it does not say how this can occur if ESD and Greenhouse gas emission targets are also to be met.

2.5 PARLIAMENTARY ZONE REVIEW

The *Parliamentary Zone Review* (National Capital Authority, 2000a) was commissioned for the Commonwealth Government and co-ordinated by the National Capital Authority. It reported its findings in March 2000.

The Parliamentary Zone is located in the centre of the Central National Area (Figure 2.6). Forming the southern apex of National Triangle with its juxtaposition of water and land axes, the Parliamentary Zone is the key image most people have of Canberra. It "...is the symbolic heart of the National Capital and is at the geometric centre of the Griffin plan..." (p 6)

The Parliamentary Zone Review (PZR) evolved from concerns that the area, which contains Australia's most important national institutions and is the most visible and highly visited area of the Nation's Capital, is losing its meaning and relevance as the symbol of Australian unity. It revisits the enduring perceptions of isolation and difficulties with its legibility in particular, that have diminished the visitor experience:

"The Parliamentary Zone ...is surprisingly difficult to find. The grand scale of the spaces and the buildings contained within them are inspiring as a formal arrangement of elements when viewed from distant, higher elevations. However, when confronted with finding and exploring these places at ground level, a lack of signage and poor visibility of some buildings from their approach routes can disorient visitors. They can also be over-awed by the distances between buildings and lack of facilities within the Zone that assist them with locating their destinations." (National Capital Authority, 2000b, p 7)

The Review aimed to "...refresh and promulgate the historical vision for the Zone and to provide innovative and practical ways of translating [the] vision into reality." (p iii)

As a strategic planning exercise, the Review undertook a critical appraisal of previous schemes and an assessment of present and future needs. If adopted, the PZR's provisions will replace those of the Parliamentary Zone Development Plan of 1986, and be incorporated, through amendments, into the National Capital Plan. The Review acknowledges the challenge to make the Parliamentary Zone a lively, people oriented place, a precinct that will be more widely recognised and familiar in Australian civic life.

The main theme that emerged from the Review was that the Parliamentary Zone, despite the importance of the area and the range of opportunities and attractions it offers to locals and visitors, 'fails' at the human level. The classic image of the area as large grassed spaces and long views, while visually spectacular, can be alienating and, as a result, often devoid of people.

In response to these perceptions of alienation and inaccessibility the Review sought to develop urban design initiatives that would work towards building a more user-friendly environment. While ensuring preservation of the Griffin legacy, it put forward elements that would facilitate movement and activity - a place where people would want to come to use its diversity of spaces for a range of purposes. The Zone would cater for ceremonial gatherings and a point of assembly; anchor the national institutions and attractions; and serve its traditional role for leisure and recreation uses. It would become more multi-purpose by providing for both active and passive pursuits. The Review coined a new term for the Zone - the *Place of the People*.

To facilitate this direction, the Review recommended:

- a large public gathering space be built on the north-south axis at the edge of the Lake;
- new pedestrian spaces and walking tracks;
- 'campus' style planning to guide future developments; and
- a cultural policy to enhance the visitor experience in the Zone.

Access Issues

Importantly, the PZR recognised that with an increasing critical mass of attractions and activities located in and around the Zone, enhanced accessibility would be integral to its success. Of the series of guiding principles that the panel developed to focus and direct its review, access is nominated as a key element in the core principle:

"The Parliamentary Zone will be given meaning as:

The Place of the People, accessible to all Australians so that they can more fully understand and appreciate the collective experience and rich diversity of this country." (p iv)

The historical focus on roads and car parks in development planning have left a legacy which now dominates the visual setting for most buildings in the Zone and contributes to growing traffic volumes and safety concerns. The general abundance of free parking and relatively poor public transport access have conspired to encourage a high level of car dependence for both commuters and visitors.

Commenting on the existing public transport, the PZR finds that it "...is not convenient for the visitor wanting to move about the Zone with relative spontaneity..." and, together with the wide separation of attractions and inadequate pedestrian links between them, visitors are virtually forced to use cars. (p 38) The Review found the Zone's cycleways and pedestrian circulation systems generally are disjointed and incomplete.

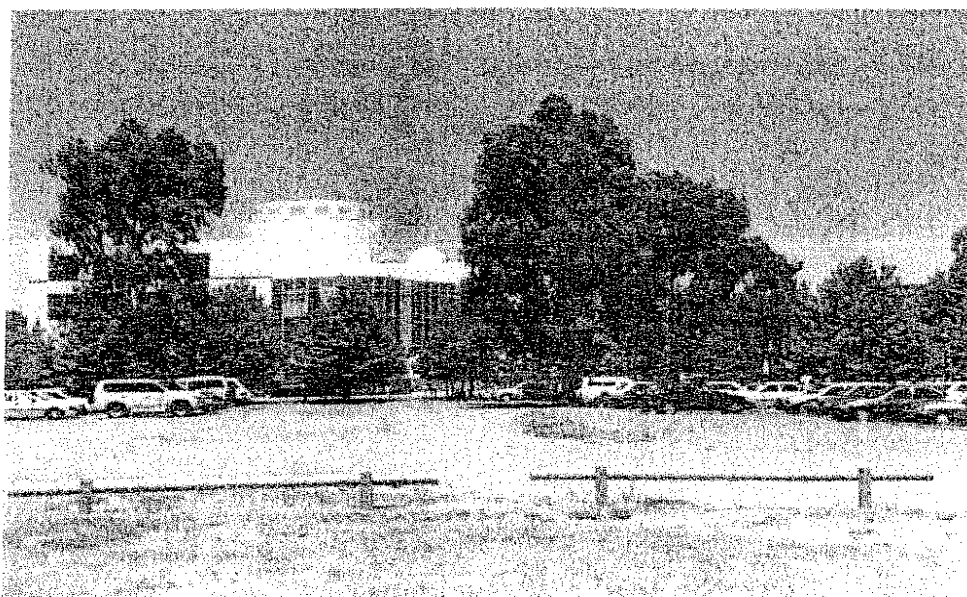
The Review calls for improved access within the Zone through more coherent traffic and pedestrian circulation systems, visitor friendly parking and public transport. The specific proposals are discussed in more detail below.

Parking

Despite the significant provision of car parking within the Zone (some 14 hectares), the Review found that visitors are often competing with commuters for parking, particularly in the northern part of the Zone where major visitor attractions such as the National Gallery of Australia and the National Science and Technology Centre are adjacent to large public sector employment nodes. (Figure 2.20) The high level of demand for commuter parking is primarily because all parking within the Zone is free. Apart from the high demand from workers located in the Zone and nearby Barton, added pressure has come from commuters bound for Civic, an area which is subject to pay parking, who can park in the Zone for free and then catch a bus or walk to their Civic workplace.

The Review proposes to reduce long term demand for parking by introducing a range of management measures including reduced parking supply and charging. Primarily aimed at reducing commuter parking demand, the Review suggests that visitors would continue to park free in certain locations for short (1-3 hour) stays and be reimbursed for longer term stays through a voucher system. Charging would not apply on weekends or holidays. (pp 40-41)

Figure 2.20 High demand for parking has resulted in alienation of parkland adjacent to the National Science and Technology Centre



Source: Author (2001)

Shuttle bus

The Review recommends the introduction of a shuttle bus system that "...will encourage people to use their cars less and will be a convenient and welcoming way for visitors to move around the *Place of the People* and learn more about its relevance." (p 42)

The proposal would encourage visitors to park their vehicles at a destination within the Zone and then join a shuttle to move easily between attractions. With an ideal frequency of every 10 to 15 minutes, the shuttle would link the national attractions, offices and public car

parks within the Zone. It could also offer on-board visitor information about the institutions, roles and significance of the *Place of the People*. The shuttle would supplement the 'external' public transport system provided by ACTION.

The Review flagged the need for further study before the shuttle bus concept could be implemented. Vehicle type, energy source and operational costs were all to be determined. Financial viability was considered "critical" and in this context linking the shuttle bus with future commercial car parking was put forward as an option. (p 42)

Future expansion of the shuttle bus system to service other attractions such as the Australian War Memorial and the new National Museum of Australia was also canvassed along with possible links to ferry services on the Lake.

Analysis/Outcomes

The PZR signals a range of major new developments for the Parliamentary Zone, which will, in turn, encourage greater visitation and activity. The Commonwealth Place and National Aerospace Centre initiatives, along with numerous smaller projects underway or planned, will build interest in and the time spent within the Zone by both locals and visitors. Further, the opening of the National Museum of Australia at Acton and the upgraded National Capital Exhibition at Regatta Point will also add to the critical mass of attractions in the Central National Area.

To support the inevitable growth in visitors, sustainable and convenient access will be essential. The Review has acknowledged the need for improvements but has focussed its attention primarily on the Zone itself. The pay-parking and shuttle bus initiatives are both important and worthwhile in advancing the accessibility of the area. They are not, however, sufficient in themselves to significantly influence the more desirable outcome of shifting modal choice away from cars.

A more holistic approach is required. The acceptance (even encouragement) of cars into the Zone by constructing car parking structures to cater for both commuters and visitors should be reconsidered. In the long term such a strategy is likely to cause congestion; add to greenhouse emissions; entrench car dependence and undermine use of public transport, especially by commuters.

The introduction of a shuttle bus to enhance mobility is strongly supported, however, as currently proposed, it would serve a route wholly *within* the Zone. To maximise its value as a transport management tool, its operational route should be extended beyond the Zone to form a direct link with the major transport trunk routes and interchange in Civic. Ideally, the shuttle bus should aim to serve both the commuter and visitor markets. In that way both revenue and return on capital would be maximised, and the service would be better integrated with the greater metropolitan public transport system.

The PZR has focussed heavily on the function of the Zone as a visitor destination. In doing so it has largely ignored the impacts of the significant workforce based both in and adjacent to the Zone and their access needs. These commuters would represent a large potential market for any new public transport system, which in turn would add to its viability. Further, the PZR's consideration of only intra-Zone movement, rather than addressing the wider context of access to and from the Zone, constrains the much greater potential of a transit system which integrates with Canberra's existing public transport; the city and the major attractions located outside the Zone, such as the Australian War Memorial and the National Museum of Australia.

The Review's possible linking of the financial viability of the shuttle bus service with the revenue raised from car parking may result in an unsustainable co-dependency arrangement.