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A WHOLE NEW WORLD

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16 April 2008

Senator Kate Lundy
The Chair
The Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via Email: jscncet@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator

Canberra International Airport Submission – 'The inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority'

This submission addresses the extensive planning system at major Australian airports, including Canberra International Airport, the consistency of the Airport's development with local planning schemes (including the National Capital Plan and the Canberra Spatial Plan), consultation with the National Capital Authority and the ACT Government, the road system around the Airport and the ACTION and Deane's bus services to the Airport.

1 The planning system at all major Australian Airports

All major Australian airports, including all capital city airports, are governed by the same set of planning and building control laws, including:

- *Airports Act 1996;*
- *Airports Regulations 1997;*
- *Airports (Building Control) Regulations 1996;*
- *Airports (Control of On-Airport Activities) Regulations 1997;*
- *Airports (Environmental Protection Regulations 1997; and*
- *Environment Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act 2000 (EPBC Act).*

These acts and regulations constitute a system of planning control by the Commonwealth which is both comprehensive, covers all building activities, and in many cases, are significantly more onerous than either the requirements of Territory planning laws or the National Capital Plan.

These laws require a number of key elements, including the development of a Master Plan, Environment Strategy and Major Development Plans as well as the requirement to submit to a range of different types of planning approval processes.

1.1 Airport Lease

Like all land in the ACT, all Australian airports were sold under a leasehold tenure system, with a 50 year lease plus a 49 year option. The leases sold included an extensive range of development rights, but did not allow some activities, such as gambling, prostitution, jelly wrestling, residential development and a range of other activities. The development of the Airport in accordance with this lease must also be consistent with the Master Plan approved by the Minister for Transport. All bidders during the sale process were aware of the development rights attached to the development and the scale of development available.

It is worth noting that the Federal Airports Corporation (FAC) had plans for a business park at Canberra Airport prior to the privatisation process. The design of Brindabella Business Park was substantially very similar to the designs undertaken by the Federal Airports Corporation.

An extensive set of development rights were purchased with the Airport lease. All bidders in the sale process of the Airport were aware of these development rights.

However, the Commonwealth has an extensive planning regime in place for all major Australian airports to guide the use of those rights.

1.2 Master Plan

It is a requirement of the *Airports Act* that all development on the Airport must be consistent with the Master Plan approved by the Minister for Transport. The Master Plan outlines a range of issues, including the development proposals for the Airport and the proposed land uses on the Airport. The Master Plan has a timeframe of 20 years and beyond, and must be revised every 5 years.

Canberra International Airport has now had two Master Plans approved by the Minister for Transport: the original 1999 Master Plan, which was followed by the 2005 Master Plan (which is currently in force)¹. There is no other location in the ACT where a land owner is required to undertake a Master Plan which receives the level of scrutiny and public consultation as the Master Plan required to be undertaken at Canberra Airport.

When a new Master Plan is proposed, a draft of that Master Plan must undergo an extensive 90 day public consultation process.² During that consultation process there is at least one public meeting, copies of the Plan are available from the Airport's website and available from the Airport's office. Members of the public are then invited to make written comments on the Master Plan.

It is then a requirement of the *Airports Act* that that Airport have due regard to all submissions on the Master Plan before submitting a final draft to the Minister for Transport with all copies of public submissions. Having regard to those public submissions, the Minister then has the opportunity to approve the Master Plan if the

¹ The Airport has just undertaken a further public consultation process on its next Master Plan in preparation to submit it to the Minister for approval.

² In March 2007, Master Plans and Major Development Plans had their consultation periods changed to 60 business days, which equates approximately to 90 days, depending on when the consultation was undertaken.

Minister believes that the Master Plan has met all of his requirements. Similarly, if the Minister judges that the Master Plan is inadequate, then he has the opportunity to not approve the Master Plan.

The Master Plan process is a process which no other landholder in the ACT is subjected to. It is a process which outlines to the public the future development of the Airport, allows the public input into the Airport's plans, and gives the Minister for Transport control over the development of the Airport.

1.3 Major Development Plans

In addition to undertaking a Master Plan, all major developments on the Airport are then subjected to another extensive process with further significant public consultation under a Major Development Plan process.

The Major Development Plan process involves a further 90 days of public consultation. Again, this gives further opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed development. It should be noted that this 90 day public consultation process is significantly longer than ACTPLA's 15 business day (or approximately 21 day) consultation process.

The Airport is then required to undertake due regard to the written public submissions on the proposed development and provide the Major Development Plan along with the written submissions to the Minister.

Like development proposals before ACTPLA, the Minister then has the opportunity to approve or not approve the proposed development (after he reviews all public submissions). Similarly, like development proposals to ACTPLA, the Minister has the ability to approve the proposed development with conditions. In the past, the Minister has placed conditions on all Major Development Plans at Canberra Airport.

Major Development Plans have been undertaken for a range of activities on the Airport including office buildings in Brindabella Business Park and Majura Park (near Brand Depot), for retail activities, for the Airport terminal and for runway and taxiway works.

Major Development Plans involve a comprehensive and extensive consultation period longer than any consultation period in the ACT. The public has the opportunity to comment on these proposals and these proposals must be approved by the Minister for Transport.

1.4 Airport Building Controller

In addition to the Master Plan and Major Development Plan, another layer of regulation exists in the Department of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Local Government's Airport Building Controller.

All development on the Airport must be approved by the Department's Airport Building Controller. The Controller judges the proposed development against a range of criteria outlined in the *Airports Act*, *Airports Regulations*, and *Airports (Building Control) Regulations*. Amongst other things, the Department's Controller determines whether the development is consistent with the approved Master Plan.

The Department of Transport's Airport Building Controller provides another layer of planning and building control.

1.5 Airports (Environmental Protection Regulations)

In addition to the above requirements, the Airport is subjected to an extensive set of environmental regulations under the *Airports Act* and *Airports (Environmental Protection Regulations)*. While we do not go into detail regarding these environmental requirements, they are widely regarded (including by the ACT Government) as being significantly more onerous than Territory environmental regulations. These requirements include the establishment of an Environment Management System, an Environment Strategy, detailed ongoing monitoring, and detailed annual reporting on the state and treatment of the environment.

1.6 Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act)

Finally, in addition to the environmental requirements of the regulations under the *Airports Act* and *Airports (Environmental Protection Regulations)*, the Airport must adhere to the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act).

Where there is a significant impact upon the environment of a proposed development, the Airport must refer the proposed development to the Minister for Environment. The definition of significant impact has been widely interpreted by the Minister. Issues considered by the Minister in his assessment of impacts have been similarly wide, and has extended well beyond just purely environmental issues.

The Minister for Environment then makes a draft determination regarding the proposed development before exhibiting the draft determination for public comment. The Minister for Environment then must have regard to the public comments before making a final determination. This process is particularly convoluted and time-consuming.³

The processes described above in 1.5 and 1.6 in relation to the environmental procedures and processes that must be undertaken are widely considered to be significantly stricter and more onerous than Territory or NCA requirements.

2 Consistency with local planning schemes

The development on the Airport is consistent with the local planning schemes in force within the ACT, including the National Capital Plan and the Canberra Spatial Plan.

As outlined above, the Minister must choose to approve or not approve the Master Plan. One issue that the Minister must consider in his approval of the Master Plan is how the Airport has addressed the consistency with local planning schemes. In the case of both approved Master Plans (ie: in 1999 and 2005), the Minister has approved the Master Plan which notes that the Master Plan is consistent with the local planning schemes.

This is further outlined below.

³ Other determination methods are also available to the Minister. The process described here is the least convoluted. Other methods can be significantly more time consuming.

2.1 Consistency with the National Capital Plan

Canberra International Airport is both defined as a “Defined Office Employment Centre” and also located on the East-West Transport Corridor in the National Capital Plan.

The National Capital Plan states that major office employment should be located within Defined Office Employment Centres located on the two transport corridors (including the East-West Transport Corridor). This is outlined in Chapter 3 “Office Employment Location” of the National Capital Plan:

3.3 Policies for the Location of Office Employment

“(a) Major office employment should be located within Defined Office Employment Centres located within the two transport corridors developed from Belconnen Town Centre to Queanbeyan and from Gungahlin Town Centre to Tuggeranong Town Centre as indicated in Figure 19.

(b) Defined Office Employment Centres within the East-West Corridor comprise:

- Belconnen Town Centre (as defined* in Part B2B of the Territory Plan)
- Bruce [as shown in Figure 7 (Office Sites-Bruce) in Part B2E of the Territory Plan]
- Civic Centre (as defined in Part B2A of the Territory Plan and also the Designated Areas shown in Figure 10 of the National Capital Plan)
- Russell (the Designated Areas shown in Figure 12 of the National Capital Plan)
- Canberra International Airport (the Designated Areas shown in Figure 14 of the National Capital Plan)”

Source: National Capital Plan, Section 3.3 Policies for the Location of Office Employment

This policies for the location of office employment is further reiterated in Figure 19 of the National Capital Plan (shown below), which also shows Canberra International Airport both as a Defined Office Employment Centre and on the East-West Transport Corridor.

Retail is a use which is explicitly permitted at Canberra International Airport in the National Capital Plan. When seeking approval for Brand Depot, the Airport sought approval from the National Capital Authority. The National Capital Authority assessed the proposal to develop Brand Depot against the retail hierarchy outlined in the National Capital Plan and concluded (after seeking independent external planning advice) that the proposal was consistent with the National Capital Plan.

It should be noted that ACTPLA subsequently approved a significantly larger shopping centre in Fyshwick of a much greater scale than Brand Depot (ie: 60,000m² approved in Fyshwick by the ACT Government versus the 20,000m² approved at Brand Depot). It should be noted that the 60,000m² approval of a shopping centre in Fyshwick took place after the Brand Depot was open, so presumably ACTPLA would have assessed that the cumulative impact of the 20,000m² plus 60,000m² was consistent with the retail hierarchy. We are of the opinion that the further approval of 60,000m² is inconsistent with the retail hierarchy.

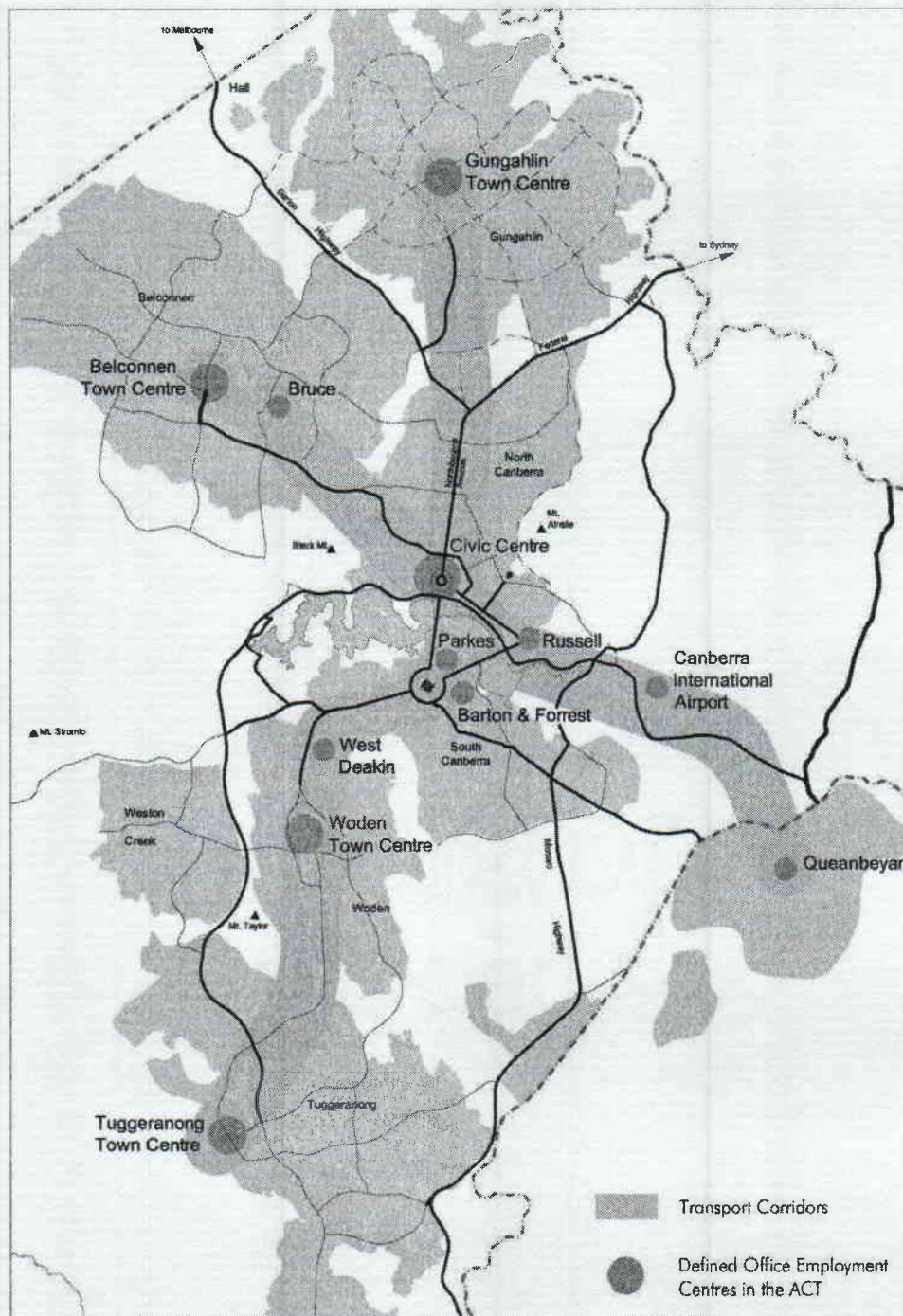
The strategic location of the Airport as a Defined Employment Centre and on one of the two Transport Corridors highlights its suitability as an employment location and indicates the consistency of the Airport's activities with the National Capital Plan.

Further, the development of Brand Depot was approved by the National Capital Authority as being a permissible land use as well as being consistent with the retail hierarchy outlined in the National Capital Plan.

Figure 1: The National Capital Plan's Defined Employment Centres (Figure 19)

Defined Office Employment Centres

Figure 19



2.2 Consistency with the Canberra Spatial Plan

The Spatial Plan confirms Canberra International Airport's central role in terms of employment growth by identifying the Airport:

1. At the intersection of two of Canberra's three employment corridors⁴. The Plan states that the three corridors will form the primary focus for employment in the ACT. The employment corridors are illustrated in the figure below.
2. Canberra International Airport is defined both as an Activity Node⁵ and as an Employment Node⁶. Activity Nodes are of particular importance in the Spatial Plan as the Spatial Plan states:

"Decisions on the location of major employment growth will be guided by principles that will seek to concentrate employment in activity nodes well serviced by public transport and supported by a complementary range of services..."

Source: Canberra Spatial Plan, page 50

3. As a "Priority 1" employment area, to be developed in the "short term".

The fact that there are no other locations within the ACT with all three of these priorities (ie: at the intersection of two employment corridors, defined as an activity Node and defined as a "Priority 1" employment area) highlights the strategic importance the Spatial Plan places upon Canberra International Airport as an employment centre. Further, it highlights that the activities at the Airport are consistent with the Spatial Plan.

3 Consultation with National Capital Authority and other Commonwealth agencies

Canberra International Airport holds regular formal consultation meetings with the National Capital Authority and other key government agencies (including the Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Local Government and the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts).

At these regular meetings, development proposals at the Airport are discussed and construction activity is discussed. At no point in these meetings has there been any suggestion that what the Airport is doing is inconsistent with the National Capital Plan or any other planning scheme.

4 Consultation with ACT Government

Canberra International Airport has a strong and fruitful consultation process with all levels of the ACT Government. The most senior members of the Airport, including the Chairman, Managing Director, Executive Director and Director of Planning meet

⁴ Refer to Map 4 of the Canberra Spatial Plan (Page 13).

⁵ Refer to Map 4, 5, 6 and 8 of the Canberra Spatial Plan.

⁶ Refer to Page 52 of the 52 of the Canberra Spatial Plan.

regularly with both politicians and bureaucrats. The number of meetings held with different levels of the ACT Government are extensive and include meetings with:

- The Chief Minister: 8-10 times per year over the last 10 years
- The Minister for Planning: 3-5 times per year over the last 10 years
- The Minister for Transport: 3-5 times per year over the last 10 years
- The Chief Minister's Department: 8-12 times per year over the last 10 years
- ACT Roads: 15-20 times per year over the last 3 years

The process also includes a formal consultation process with the Chief Minister's Department, where senior members of both the Chief Minister's Department and the Airport meet with a formal structure to discuss future development proposals at the Airport, construction at the Airport, roads, infrastructure and a range of issues affecting either party.

Issues are regularly raised by both parties which may be of concern. The vast majority of these issues have been resolved in a highly fruitful manner with a result that is acceptable to both parties.

The one exception to this regular consultation process is ACTPLA, who have advised us that they have more pressing matters demanding the time of their officers. If ACTPLA had serious concerns regarding the Airport, we believe that they would be (and should be) attending consultation meetings, and raise those concerns at those meetings. This is discussed in more detail in Annexure A.

While the ACT Government has expressed some concerns regarding the rate of growth of the Airport, at no point in the consultations with the ACT Government (including with consultations with ACTPLA) has there been any suggestion that the Airport has not acted consistently with the National Capital Plan or the Spatial Plan.

Regular consultations have been held with the ACT Government to discuss development at the Airport. These consultation have been a useful conduit for both parties, and most issues have been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties through this process.

ACTPLA have failed to attend regular consultation meetings as they believe they have more pressing matters demanding the time of their officers

5 Roads

5.1 How Did This Traffic Congestion Arise?

Four to five years ago, there was almost no congestion on the road between the Airport and the City (Pialligo Avenue) nor on Majura Road, which runs north-south on the western side of the Airport.

This was despite the fact that Pialligo Avenue was operating at approximately 28,000 - 30,000 vehicles per day. (Note that this is well above the 20,000 vehicles per day threshold at which a single lane road should be duplicated). However traffic on Majura Road was only 4,000 - 4,500 vehicles per day and accordingly the major roundabout intersections between the east-west road (Pialligo Avenue) to the city and the major north-south road (Majura Road) were able to handle traffic, even in the peaks.

The chronology of the development of the traffic congestion around the Airport, in summary form is as follows:

- In the ACT Government's 2000 Budget, funding was included for the duplication of Pialligo Avenue from the Airport all the way to the City. Completion of this project was announced to be by June 2002.
- In 2002, with the planning processes for the Gungahlin Drive Extension (GDE) running late and the growth of Gungahlin continuing with its consequent traffic impact particularly into Northbourne Avenue, the ACT Government committed to build Horsepark Drive from Gungahlin through to Majura Road meeting at Federal Highway. ACT Government projections anticipated that traffic would increase on Majura Road from 4,000 - 4,500 vehicles per day to around 8,000 vehicles per day.
- The opening of Horsepark Drive in 2004 saw traffic on Majura Road rise to 16,500 vehicles per day, well beyond any projections. This had an immediate impact on the traffic flow at peak times where Majura Road intersected with Fairbairn Avenue and Pialligo Avenue. The ongoing growth in Gungahlin has seen traffic on Majura Road reach levels up to 19,500 vehicles per day in March 2008.
- In November 2005, the delayed commencement of the GDE project and significant cost overruns with this project caused the removal from the ACT Budget of the funding for the duplication of Pialligo Avenue between the Airport and the City. The funds for this duplication had been in every ACT Budget up until that time.
- In January 2006, the Airport commissioned and jointly funded with ACT Roads a detailed origin and destination study on traffic through all of the major regional road intersections. The consequence of this was the development of a comprehensive roads duplication strategy which was then put to an ACT Government convened Roads Taskforce to examine the problems.
- A copy of the ACT Roads Taskforce report is attached at Annexure C, together with a letter to the Airport from Jon Stanhope, in relation to the traffic issues. As a consequence of this report, funding by the ACT Government for a range of roads improvements was included in the 2007 ACT Budget.

In summary, whilst the growth of the Airport has contributed to traffic congestion on the regional roads around the Airport, it is the growth of Gungahlin and traffic on Majura Road following the completion of Horsepark Drive that has led to a major traffic bottleneck where this road intersects with the Queanbeyan and Airport traffic on Pialligo Avenue.

Further, the duplication of the road between the Airport and the City which would alleviate these problems was expected to be completed by 2002 but has been delayed by other road priorities within the ACT.

5.2 Solving the Traffic Delays – A Strong Private / Government Partnership

A major upgrade of the regional road infrastructure around Canberra Airport is now well and truly underway. After a number of years of significant traffic delays following the opening of Horsepark Drive in Gungahlin (which connects to the top of Majura

Road at the Federal Highway), a three stage program (see Annexure B) of significant major upgrades to the regional roads around the Airport will deliver an appropriate infrastructure solution for the long term:

1. Stage 1 – Duplication of Pialligo Avenue from the Beltana Road roundabout through to the Brindabella Business Park. This component of the works is being project managed and constructed by Canberra International Airport with the Airport liable for all costs exceeding the ACT Government's \$7.5million. Total budget cost is now expected to be approximately \$14.8million, versus an original estimate of \$12.4million. These works will be substantially complete by the end of 2008.

As well as two lanes in each direction on Pialligo Avenue to and from Queanbeyan, there will be two lanes entering the Airport and two lanes exiting the Airport so for a substantial part of this roadway, the capacity will in fact be 3 and 4 lanes in each direction.

2. Stage 2 – The ACT Government have committed to duplicate the balance of Pialligo Avenue to the City, the whole of Fairbairn Avenue back to the ADFA entry, install traffic lights with major lane capacity at each of the intersections and expand the lane capacity on Morshead Drive. These works will be built in two stages, the first stage of which is now underway and being built by local contractors Huon. The second half will commence in June 2008 and will be complete by March 2009. These works will substantially improve the north-south traffic which is struggling on the single lane road network. This is particularly the case given the high number of heavy vehicle movements using the north-south road system as a heavy vehicle bypass of the city.
3. Stage 2 – The Extension of Monaro Highway – this four lane road will be built to extend over Molonglo River, over Pialligo Avenue and over Fairbairn Avenue before heading north up the Majura Valley and rejoining the existing Majura Road just north of the Airport. This project is a Commonwealth and ACT Government joint initiative which is part of Auslink II. The ACT Government is working on completing all planning and design approvals this year to ensure a commencement of construction between April and June 2009.

In summary, the problem of regional and airport traffic will be substantially improved with the completion of the works that are now under way by the Airport and the ACT Government. These works will be completed in early 2009. Within three years, the completion of the Monaro Highway extension will ensure that a proper long term roads infrastructure solution is in place for the major arterial roads around the Airport and the management of their intersections.

This has come about as a consequence of extensive cooperation between the ACT Government and the Airport with the strong support of the Commonwealth Government.

6 Busses

Canberra International Airport has subsidised a bus service between the Airport and Civic for 8 years. This bus service was provided by Deane's Buslines, which they also complemented with a bus service between the Airport and Queanbeyan. Both of these services are now self-supporting.

Now that the Airport is at a point which is able to support bus services, we are pleased that ACTION has announced the commencement of direct services to the Airport. These services commence on 2 June 2008. Once these services are established, the Airport will have direct services to:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Civic (via Campbell Park) | ACTION |
| 2. Civic (via Russell) | ACTION |
| 3. Woden | ACTION |
| 4. Gungahlin (Express) | ACTION |
| 5. Tuggeranong (Express) | ACTION |
| 6. Civic | Deane's Buslines |
| 7. Queanbeyan | Deane's Buslines |

The ACTION services are shown in Annexure D.

The Airport is now well connected to the ACT sustainable transport network with direct connections to all major transport hubs except Belconnen.

7 Conclusion

In summary, we make the submission that:

- There is a comprehensive and orderly planning system in place at Canberra International Airport which is consistent with all of the other major Australian airports. This planning scheme in many respects is more onerous than the Territory planning system.
- The Airport developments have been consistent with the National Capital Plan and the Canberra Spatial Plan.
- Regular and prosperous consultation occurs with the ACT and Commonwealth governments on development proposals and other issues at the Airport.
- The issues regarding roads and transport are not the fault of the Airport, but through co-operation between the Airport, ACT Government and the Commonwealth, these issues are being resolved.

As always, I would be happy to provide more information on these points and any others should you or your committee desire.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Byron
Managing Director

Annexure A: Letter from Neil Savery to Stephen Byron, 10 August 2006

Canberra International Airport proposed a regular consultation meeting with ACTPLA to discuss a range of Airport related issues, including developments proposals at the Airport. A number of meetings were held and were regarded by ourselves to be very successful. However, soon after, Neil Savery wrote to the Airport stating:

“I do not intend for the Authority to continue to participate in these meetings in the foreseeable future given the more pressing matters demanding the time of its [ACTPLA’s] officers”.

Source: Letter from Neil Savery to Stephen Byron, 10 August 2006 (Copied below)

Canberra Airport then wrote to Neil Savery some months later to re-invite ACTPLA to regular consultation. Mr Savery again refused to undertake consultation.

Following these refusals by ACTPLA to consult with Canberra Airport, the Airport then invited the ACT Government’s Chief Minister’s Department to regular formal consultation.⁷ These consultations are ongoing and are a strong and fruitful conduit for communication between the ACT Government and the Airport.

Many other consultations are also undertaken with the ACT Government, as outlined in the submission above. These consultations have been regarded as very constructive.

⁷ It should be noted that regular consultations had previously been undertaken with CMD, but they had not been formalised into a formal consultation structure.



To - S -
Neil



05/19019

Mr Stephen Byron
Managing Director
Canberra International Airport 11 AUG 2006
1st Floor, 2 Brindabella Circuit
Brindabella Business Park
CANBERRA AIRPORT ACT 2609

Dear Mr Byron

I note that the next scheduled meeting on Airport and Metropolitan Planning is nominally 24 August.

I do not intend for the Authority to continue to participate in these meetings in the foreseeable future given more pressing matters demanding the time of its officers.

The Authority will continue to be involved in the Government's taskforce looking at transport issues around the airport and will consult with the airport in respect of the Majura/Symonston corridor study once this work has commenced.

Yours sincerely

Neil Savery
Chief Planning Executive

10 August 2006

CC Director, Planning Services
Director, Development Services

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Annexure B: Road Upgrades Around Canberra Airport

Monaro Highway Extension & Pialligo Avenue Duplication

Expected Completion Dates

Stage 1a - Pialligo Avenue Duplication

- Planning Approval - September till December 2007
- Construction Start - Early 2008
- Completion - December 2008

Stage 1b - Pialligo, Morshead, Fairbairn Upgrade

- Planning Approval - June 2008
- Construction Start - Mid-late 2008
- Completion - Mid-late 2009

Stage 1c - Pialligo & Fairbairn Upgrade

- Planning Approval - October 2007 till January 2008
- Construction Start - Early 2008
- Completion - December 2008

Stage 2 - Monaro Highway Extension

- Planning & Design - 2008
- Construction Start - 2009
- Target Completion - Late 2009



To City/North Canberra

To City

To Queanbeyan

Annexure C: ACT Roads Taskforce Report

Canberra Airport Roads

Working Group Report

October 2006

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1. Introduction

The Minister for the Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA convened a Roundtable meeting in Canberra on 29 June 2006 to consider the road network in the vicinity of Canberra Airport.

Traffic in the vicinity of the airport has increased over the last few years and with it, serious congestion and delays.

The roads in the vicinity of the airport play an important role for the ACT economy, the surrounding New South Wales (NSW) region and nationally given the importance of the Monaro Highway as a freight route connection to the Federal Highway.

It was agreed that the provision of relieving measures for the increased traffic in the vicinity of the airport is an important initiative that will benefit the region.

To this end the Roundtable established a working group to:

- Overview the planning of road upgrades in the vicinity of Canberra Airport over the short to medium terms (0 – 15 years)
- Identify the contribution that road improvements can make locally, in a regional context as well as part of the National AusLink Network
- Agree on a staging plan for such road improvements and make recommendations to the relevant governments on this program of work as well as the funding requirements
- Provide a report to the Roundtable no later than October 2006.

2. Working Group

Mr Tony Blunn a former Secretary of a number of Federal Departments including Housing & Constructions and the Attorney-General's, was asked to act as the independent chair of the working group. Senior representatives from the following organisations / jurisdictions were invited to participate in the working group:

- Territory and Municipal Services (TaMS)
- Chief Minister's Department (CMD)
- ACT Treasury
- Roads and Traffic Authority NSW (RTA NSW)
- Queanbeyan City Council (QCC)
- Canberra Airports
- National Capital Authority (NCA)
- Federal Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS)
- ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA)

The working group met on three occasions.

3. Conclusions

The Working Group concluded that:

- There is a need for the ACT Government, in cooperation with the appropriate Commonwealth agencies, to develop a regional strategy that will accommodate the foreseeable development impacts on roads in the vicinity of the airport;
- Whilst it was not in a position to make any comparative assessment, there is a compelling case, even in the absence of such a regional strategy, for the upgrading of the road system given current demands and the scale of developments already in the pipeline;
- If the proposed improvements are not made and based only on the anticipated growth, the traffic situation will deteriorate unacceptably with travel times nearly trebling on the North/South Corridor (from 8 minutes to 21 minutes) and effectively doubling on the East/West Corridor (from 8 minutes to 15 minutes) by 2016.
- The initial rapid benefit/cost appraisal of 8.16 for the staged works demonstrates that the proposals are practical and cost effective.
- The improvements proposed by TaMS are sensible and strategically sound. In the case of the regionally significant North / South Corridor they will result in significant long-term benefits. In relation to the East / West Corridor, whilst there are immediate and significant benefits, it must be recognised that, because of the already anticipated growth in usage, travel times are projected to return to the present unsatisfactory levels by 2016. As a result of the unanticipated growth the position will actually be worse.
- The costings appear realistic however the business case and detailed project proposals should now be developed, and the necessary approvals obtained, as a matter of high priority with a view to work starting as soon as possible.
- The funding of the project should be shared between the ACT Government and the Commonwealth.¹

4. Recommendations

The Working Group recommends that:

- A long-term East/West strategy for the roads from Glenloch Interchange through to the NSW border be developed jointly by the ACT Government and the Commonwealth as a matter of urgency, having regard to the National Capital implications
- The design and approval stages for the works currently proposed for completion by 2016 be finalised as a matter of urgency
- The ACT Government seek contributory funding for the project from the Commonwealth including funding under the Auslink Funding Programs and to that end TaMS prepare a case using the AusLink National Project Guidelines on Administration¹

¹ Due to their role in Federal Road Funding Programs the representatives of the Department of Transport and Regional Services abstained from expressing any view on the issue of cost sharing and Commonwealth funding.

- The case for Commonwealth funding be prepared and submitted as quickly as possible in order to take advantage of any funding opportunities that might arise
- The ACT Government commit to Stage One of the proposed works and the work be commenced as quickly as possible, and
- Stage Two should proceed as quickly as practicable with a view to completion within five years.

5. Road Planning Overview

At the first meeting of the Working Group, TaMS made a presentation of its assessment of the problems and its suggested solutions. The Working Group accepted that assessment as the basis for its deliberations.

A copy of that presentation is attached, Attachment A.

Having regard to the reference given to it, the Working Group agreed that there was an urgent need for a road strategy that would accommodate the current and foreseeable impacts of:

- The regional and commercial significance of the Majura Road link between the Federal and Monaro Highways; (North/South link)
- The National Capital developments already approved and those proposed
- The Gungahlin and Molonglo developments having particular regard to the impacts of the Gungahlin Drive Extension on Parkes Way; (East/West link)
- The Canberra Airport
- The ADF Joint Operations Headquarters to be constructed near Bungendore
- The developments in and around Pialligo, including those adjacent to the Airport, and
- Developments in surrounding NSW.

A distinct but related issue is the increasing significance of the Canberra Airport as the major official and ceremonial point of access for the National Capital and the importance of the related road system as part of the address of the Capital. The Working Group questions the logic of developing an international airport for the Capital served by a sub-standard road system.

The Working Group was aware of a view that the congestion and associated problems was referable to the commercial development of the areas adjacent to the airport. On the data available, the Working Group was satisfied that while obviously adding to the traffic volume those developments were not the cause of the problems.

In terms of the road network in the vicinity of the Airport the major causes of congestion and delay are at the intersections of Fairbairn Avenue and Majura Road; Morshead Drive and Dairy Road, and Monaro Highway and Morshead Drive. At peaks, current traffic volumes already exceed the carrying capacity of Morshead Drive and Pialligo Avenue between the intersections with Dairy Road and Ulinga Place.

Having reviewed the solutions proposed by TaMS, the Working Group was of the view that, with some relatively minor changes, they provided a satisfactory solution to the short-term problems and offered significant improvements in the medium-term.

However as the Roundtable is aware because of the anticipated volumes of traffic using the East/West Corridor by 2016 travel times on that corridor will then be comparable to those currently being experienced. Indeed until the road strategy referred to earlier has been developed it is not possible to predict those impacts with any confidence. In the view of the Working Group, however that need not and should not delay starting the works proposed, with the relatively minor amendments suggested, which are needed urgently to meet current and anticipated demands and are unlikely to be redundant against any future needs.

6. Road Usage

One of the criteria required for single lane roads to be considered for duplication is a daily usage exceeding 18000 vehicles per day. The Barton Highway, Drakeford Drive and Athllon Drive are recent examples of Territory roads that have been duplicated which have met or exceeded this criterion.

Under the current development scenarios, the level of traffic on Pialligo Avenue, currently at 26000 vehicles per day, would approach 30,000 vehicles a day, a level of traffic which clearly supports the duplication of this road.

Regional traffic from NSW is a significant user of roads in the vicinity of the Airport. On the section of Pialligo Avenue past the airport, Queanbeyan and the surrounding NSW regions generate almost 90% of the morning peak city bound traffic.

Commercial traffic^{ie Trucks} on the Monaro Highway and Majura Road represent some 16% of the total traffic presently utilising the connection between the Monaro Highway, Majura Road and the Federal Highway. This is an important freight route within the ACT but also serving regional NSW.

In summary, the road plan staging has a high priority for implementation with the initial or rapid economic assessment based on travel time, savings providing benefits/cost estimated at 8.16. This simply means for every dollar invested in this project you will obtain benefits of \$8.16 from improved travelling times, reduced vehicle emissions and reduced accidents. This return supports the level of investment required.

7. The Proposed Solution

As identified in the overview, unless the problems are addressed as a matter of urgency, the congestion and attendant problems, including but not confined to delays in getting to and from the airport and Queanbeyan and surrounding areas will increase significantly and rapidly.

To overcome those problems TaMS had proposed the following works to be completed in two stages.

Stage One, which should start as soon as possible, comprises:

- improvements to the capacity of the roundabout at Dairy Road / Morshead Drive
- duplication of Morshead Drive between Dairy Road and Monaro Highway
- upgrade the roundabout at Monaro Highway/Morshead Drive
- provision of an extra lane on Morshead Drive between Pialligo Avenue and Fairbairn Avenue
- duplication of Pialligo Avenue between Beltana Road and the new airport access including a new intersection.

As part of the Working Group process TaMS has reviewed the proposal to replace the roundabout at the intersection of Monaro Highway and Morshead Drive, with traffic lights. Because the traffic light scheme proposed under Stage One has limited capacity it does not provide the range of movements required for traffic entering Morshead Drive/Pialligo Avenue.

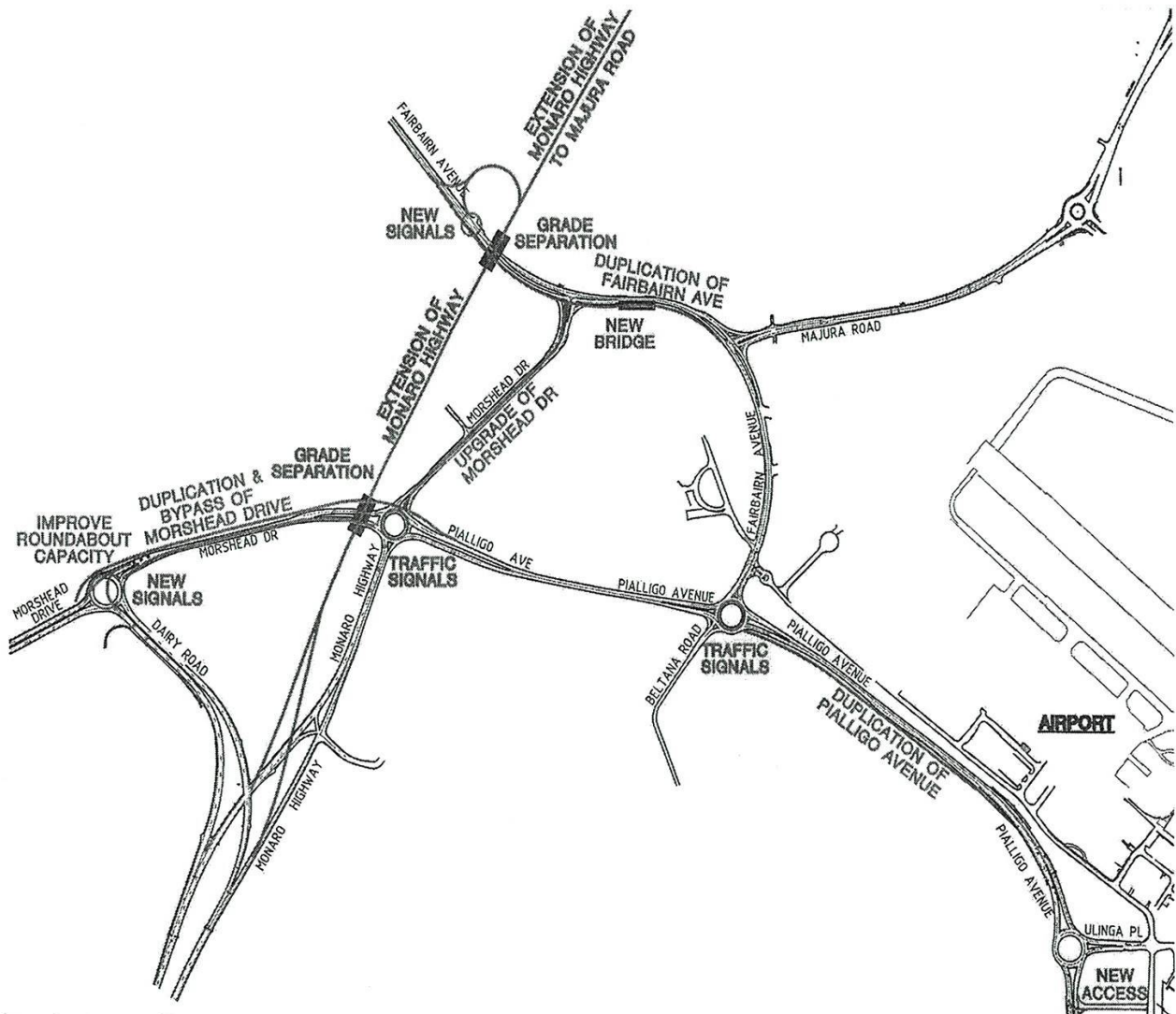
Accordingly, the Working Group accepts the advice of TaMS that it would be better in the short run to improve the capacity the roundabout arrangement in Stage One. As part of Stage Two, as a component of the proposed grade separation works, replace the roundabout with traffic signals with adequate capacity to provide a reasonable level of service during peak periods. The level of redundant work as a result of this change is minimal but unavoidable if the advantages of the Stage One works are to be realised.

The Working Group supports the amended first stage works as proposed by TaMS.

Stage Two, which in the view of the Working Group should be completed within five years will comprise:

- grade separation of the Monaro Highway and Pialligo Avenue
- provision of traffic lights at the intersections of Monaro Highway/Morshead Drive and Pialligo Avenue/Beltana Road
- provision of a new interchange at Morshead Drive/Fairbairn Avenue
- extension of Morshead Drive north by two kilometres to link into Majura Road (first section of the Majura Parkway)
- replacement of the Morshead Drive/Dairy Road with traffic lights to improve capacity.

These proposals, which are detailed in the Attachment, may be illustrated as follows:



Stage One – Changes

Stage Two - Changes

8. Costs and Funding

The combined costs for Stages One and Two are currently estimated at \$45m. This estimate is considered realistic but further work needs to be done to confirm it.

In considering the funding for the project the Working Group recognised that both the National Capital and Canberra Spatial Plans identify the importance of the airport and the importance of progressing the Majura Parkway as a major road. In a regional context the proposals are significant in terms of improved access to and from Queanbeyan and to regional NSW via the Majura link between the Federal and Monaro Highway, which is of increasing importance in terms of commercial traffic.

In the view of the Working Group there is a case for including the Majura Parkway as part of the national road network and funding it and the associated works as such. In relation to the totality of the works proposed, it is the view of the Working Group that the costs should be shared between the ACT and the Commonwealth.²

The Commonwealth representatives on the Working Group provided advice on AusLink funding programs and the issues associated with securing funds under these as follows:

- AusLink National Projects – funds are fully committed for the five years 2004-05 to 2008-09 and projects must be on the AusLink Network (the AusLink Network in the ACT comprises the Barton and Federal Highways).
- Strategic Regional – project proposals were sought in May 2006 and funds will shortly be allocated.
- Roads to Recovery – the Working Group noted that the ACT has already earmarked current and future annual allocations to other projects.

However it was agreed that it would be sensible for the proposal to be developed in accordance with the AusLink National Projects Notes on Administration in order to take advantage of any Federal funding opportunities as they become available. Given the uncertain timing of any Commonwealth funding it is the view of the Working Group that the ACT Government should make an immediate commitment to Stage One of the proposed works as part of its contribution to the whole project.

Given the seriousness of the issues, the first and most urgent task is for the project design to be “fast-tracked” and for all necessary approvals to design and construction to be obtained. The Working Group understands that while this has commenced it is yet to be finalised.

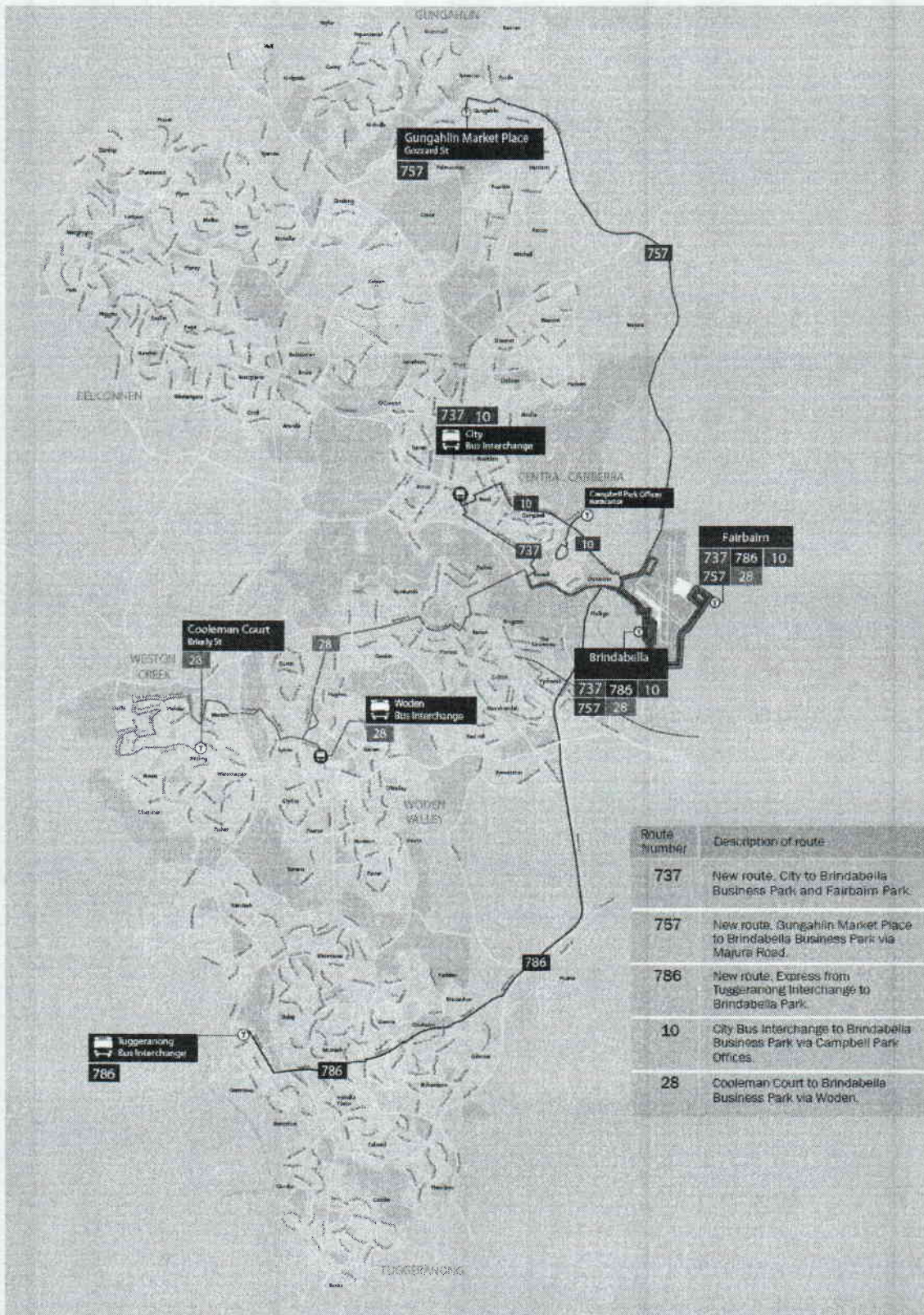
The NSW RTA consider the work in the immediate vicinity of the airport as largely a local traffic issue. However the role of the Monaro Highway is of increasing significance in terms of regional commercial traffic.

Queanbeyan City Council indicated support for both short and medium term options while confirming they would not be in a position to contribute to the cost of the project.

Canberra Airport indicated strong support for the staged road works and highlighted the impact of the timing of the initial works on development within the airport.

² Because of their role in Federal Road Funding Programs the representatives of the Department of Transport and Regional Services abstained from expressing any view on the issue of cost sharing and Commonwealth funding.

Annexure D: ACTION Bus services to Canberra International Airport





19 JAN 2007

Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Mr Stephen Byron
Managing Director
Canberra International Airport
1/2 Brindabella Circuit
Canberra Airport ACT 2609

Dear Mr Byron

Thank you for your letter of 21 November 2006 regarding traffic on roads in the vicinity of the airport.

I am aware of the recent activities that the ACT Government and others, including the Canberra Airport, are undertaking to address traffic conditions on roads in the vicinity of the airport.

I have read and support the recommended strategy of the working group chaired by Mr Tony Blunn.

I accept that while the development at the airport adds to the level of traffic on these roads it is not the cause for the congested network of the roads during peak periods. 11

I understand the airport is continuing to contribute to progressing the recommendations of the working group. By working together I am confident that we will achieve a better outcome.

Thank you for raising these matters with me. I trust that I have been of some assistance.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

15 JAN 2007

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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