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ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010

*A framework for economic,
social and environmental
development initiatives in
the ACT and region*



An Australian Government Initiative



Regional Development Australia ACT (RDA ACT) has developed the *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010* with joint funding support from the Commonwealth Government, administered through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, and the ACT Government, administered through the Chief Minister's Department - Business and Industry Development.

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- People with Disabilities ACT Inc
- Carers ACT Australia
- ACT Natural Resource Management Council
- Sustainable Population Australia – ACT and Region Branch
- South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc
- Conservation Council ACT
- Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council
- National Trust of Australia ACT

A broad range of stakeholders has provided a plethora of reports and plans that have informed this *Regional Plan*. RDA ACT particularly acknowledges the value of the ACT Government's foundation references including *The Canberra Plan*, and related plans – *Building Our Community: The Canberra Social Plan*, the *Canberra Spatial Plan* and *Economic White Paper*, and the more recent *The Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century*.

Project Manager: *Liz Veitch*, RDA ACT Manager Projects and Communications.

Foreword

Planning is an on-going process by which information is constantly refreshed and reorganised. The challenge becomes, therefore, to draw the metaphorical line that defines the end-point of a planning project such as this Plan. A Regional Plan is a 'living document' that incorporates a vast range of information from a wide variety of stakeholders; in this instance, on all issues pertaining to the ACT and its immediate region from within the three tiers of government, business and industry and their associations, educational institutions, community organisations and individuals.

Information continues to flow in – fresh and vital, and thus the *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010* can be lodged at this point only in the knowledge that it will form the basis for the *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2011*, already a work in progress! Strategic planning is a continuous process that provides an opportunity to change priorities and shift emphasis in response to new information and emerging trends.

The *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010* aims, through a process of inquiry and analysis, to predict, plan and shape the future for the ACT and region in ways that will enhance quality of life in all its facets. Its process is to present objectives, make connections, and investigate alternative development strategies, policies, projects – and their consequences, that can help to move the ACT forward, in the most direct route, towards being the vital hub of our dynamic region.

One of the precepts of planning is that planners never start with a blank page. Indeed, the Ngunnawal people are recognised as the original inhabitants of this region and the rightful traditional custodians. White settlers moved in around the 1820s; by 1908 it had been selected as the site for Australia's seat of government, and by 1912 a bush capital was designed by Walter Burleigh Griffin and construction commenced five years later. Today, Canberra is the nation's capital and a city we can all be proud of – strong, resilient and inclusive, and demonstrably liveable.

In our daily lives, we all work within a planning framework of some description. Strategic planning in the context of a *Regional Plan* for the ACT is a compilation of input from stakeholders to shape the future; it helps to establish where our spatial area is at today in socio-economic and environmental terms, where we would like it to be at a particular time in the future, and how to get there.



Strategic thinking involves the processes of determining vision, with outcomes, objectives, strategies and actions to support it.

→ **VISION**

what kind of future do we want?

→ **OUTCOME**

The desired result. In what ways do we want the future of our community to be different?

→ **OBJECTIVE**

Being the aim or the goal. What specific and measurable targets will we set?

→ **STRATEGY**

An artful means to a specific end. What alternative approaches could we take?

→ **ACTION**

The doing of something! How do we implement the strategy?



Strategic planning involves input from a wide range of stakeholders to develop and shape a shared vision for the future that focuses on outcomes.

Strategic planning involves input from a wide range of stakeholders to develop and shape a shared vision for the future that focuses on outcomes. It works to ensure, having identified a common direction, that actions collectively support the achievement of that vision. It encourages collaboration and co-operation between and within all three tiers of government - local, state and territory and national, the private sector and the community.

"The purpose of strategic planning usually is to help key decision makers figure out what the role of government ought to be, what it should do, and how it should allocate limited resources"¹.

Both the ACT Government and the Commonwealth Government have provided support to research and write the *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010*. They have identified the regional planning process to have value in ensuring government programs, activities and initiatives are integrated in their design and delivery at the regional level, and that the private sector and community needs and aspirations are identified, realistic and achievable.

The *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010* is a unique planning tool because it works on a regional perspective, with a vision unfettered by boundary lines on a map. The big picture that flows from this concept of a seamless border between the ACT and neighbouring NSW Local Government Areas encourages an overarching vision that is not solely restricted to geography, but is similarly holistic in its inclusion of all the region's stakeholders across the broad spectrum of areas that contribute to regional strength and growth and the well-being of everyone who lives here.

Strategic thinking involves the processes of determining vision, with outcomes, objectives, strategies and actions to support it. The *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010* is a living document that provides a framework upon which to build in consultation with ACT and regional stakeholders across a broad range of focus areas.

Throughout the coming year RDA ACT will continue to liaise with regional stakeholders to create a 2011 iteration of the *Regional Plan* that will modify the results of this early stage of the planning process, moving it closer towards being a comprehensive and holistic document that can underpin the future development of the ACT and region.

¹ Bryson J. M. and Einsweiler R. C. 1987, 'Introduction to Symposium on Strategic Planning', *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 53, 1:6-8. Cited in AUSTRROADS 1998:65. AUSTRROADS 1998, Principles for Strategic Planning, Austroads Inc. Melbourne.



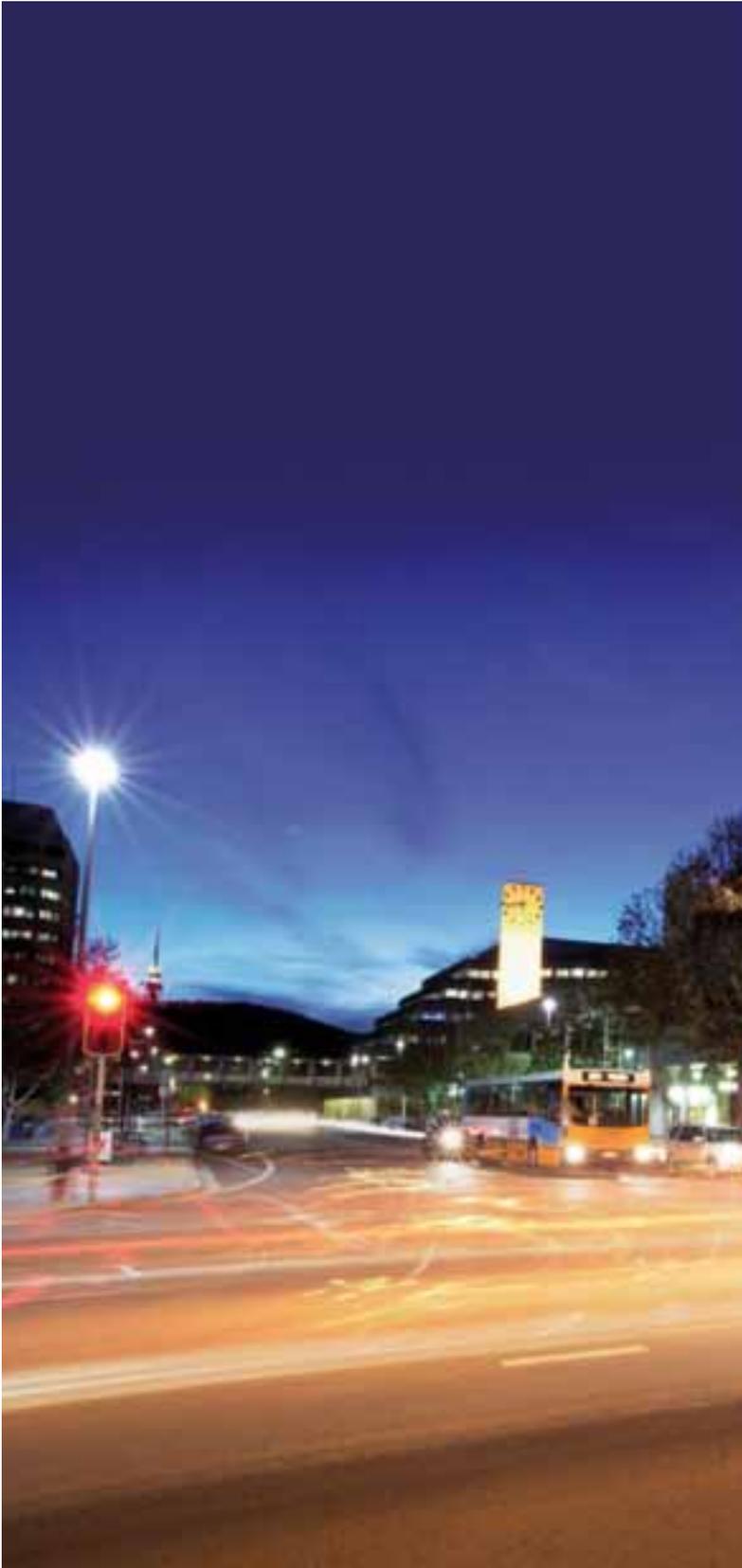


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Supplementary Documentation

- Database of Stakeholders – ACT and region
- Database of Stakeholders' Reference Documents – ACT and region

These databases are available as a separate document to the *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010*, and will be maintained on the RDA ACT website: www.rdaact.org.au

Stakeholder input to develop these databases is welcomed.

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1 Introduction

Defining and establishing an integrated planning area for the ACT region that will encourage a holistic approach to regional development between the ACT and the adjacent NSW Local Government Areas is an important objective of RDA ACT.

Each Regional Development Australia (RDA) organisation in the network of 55 RDAs across Australia is currently presenting their inaugural *Regional Plan* to the Commonwealth and their State or Territory Government – the culmination of major work undertaken since the relatively recent formation of RDAs.

Since RDA ACT's formal inception in September 2009, Members have been working to establish RDA ACT's credentials as an influential regional development organisation, and developing effective networks with other ACT and region stakeholders – across the three tiers of government, the business, industry and education sectors, and with community organisations.

This work has supported one of the major roles and responsibilities of RDA ACT: to provide the Commonwealth and ACT Governments with a *Strategic Regional Plan* for the ACT and region.

This, the first *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010*, is a living document – a starting point to attract strategic contemplation and input from stakeholders, a foundation upon which to build future *Regional Plans*, and a tool that will help to shape the future of the ACT and its neighbouring region.

RDA ACT will lodge an *ACT Strategic Regional Plan* on 30 June each year. Over time, RDA ACT will continue to develop its stakeholder networks and thus be able to provide an increasingly comprehensive knowledge of regional issues and priorities. Future plans will develop burgeoning understandings that reflect on-going consultation with key stakeholders through stakeholder meetings and community consultations across the broad range of focus areas. RDA ACT will add value to this compilation of information by putting forward a strategic plan that identifies the issues, responds to local challenges, reflects the views of local stakeholders, and promotes understanding of the optimum direction for the ACT into the future.

RDA ACT is unique in that the area it covers – the ACT, is a 'city-state', and RDA ACT therefore operates within the parameters defined by the unique characteristics and priorities of the ACT. RDA ACT's scope of operations is focussed on the ACT, but given the relevance and synergies of the ACT with its surrounding region, RDA ACT works with a regional perspective in collaboration with a range of other regional bodies, most particularly RDA Southern Inland which covers the Local Government Areas adjacent to the ACT.



Defining and establishing an integrated planning area for the ACT region that will encourage a holistic approach to regional development between the ACT and the adjacent NSW Local Government Areas is an important objective of RDA ACT. Inspired by a sense of 'seamless border', the logical extension of this objective is to progress inclusion of RDA ACT representation in the existing regional networks and forums to truly integrate all levels of government and provide planning synergies.

The first steps in developing the *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010* have been to identify the broad range of ACT and region stakeholders, and to review these stakeholders' existing regional planning reports and strategies with a view to developing a comprehensive understanding that underpins this *Regional Plan*. The holistic depth and overarching range of knowledge acquired from this research assists to formulate actions that can address, even suggest viable solutions for identified issues, needs, priorities and : gaps, while avoiding duplications.

As part of their *Regional Plans*, RDAs were requested to develop a *Strategy for Economic Development and Job Creation*. However, given that the ACT maintains the lowest unemployment rate in Australia, RDA ACT's *Regional Plan* will rather focus on a strategy to attract skilled workers to the ACT as this prioritises the ACT's unique need to fill the gaps in the local labour market.

1.1 Executive Summary

The Canberra Plan (2004) Vision:

"Canberra will be recognised throughout the world—not only as the beautiful city, uniquely designed in harmony with the environment, the seat of Australia's government and the home of its pre-eminent national institutions—but also as a place that represents the best in Australian creativity, community living and sustainable development."

Regional Overview

In January 1911, the Australian Capital Territory officially came into being when title to over 235,947 hectares of land in the 'district of Yass-Canberra' was passed to the Commonwealth by the state of New South Wales. The *Seat of Government Acceptance Act 1909* provided that ... territory would be acquired by the Commonwealth for the Seat of Government, and that it would be known as the Federal Capital Territory.

As the national capital, Canberra accommodates Australia's principal governmental, judicial, cultural, scientific, educational and military institutions. It also accommodates the legations and diplomatic residences of foreign governments and a large number of national institutions and organisations.

The introduction of self-government to the Australian Capital Territory created a circumstance whereby two governments – the Commonwealth Government and the ACT Government, now share responsibility for the further development of the Territory.

The ACT Government is responsible for managing the affairs of the Territory on a parliamentary, legislative, administrative and financial basis comparable with the Australian states. The ACT Government also manages those functions that, in the states, are performed by local government. This 'city state' role is unique in Australia and brings with it the advantage of streamlining decision making and facilitating co-ordination of activities and actions which in other jurisdictions are split between the state government and various Local Government Areas.

The Commonwealth Government continues to have governance over some land in the ACT – the 'national land' – that includes the Parliamentary Zone for example, through the National Capital Authority.

As Australia's largest inland city, Canberra serves as a major centre for the surrounding towns and districts of south-east New South Wales. Canberra is a key source of regional employment and provides high-level education, health, entertainment and retail services. The ACT has very high levels of short-term border movements, indeed the highest rate of cross border movements relative to its size of population relative to any state or territory in Australia.

ACT residents enjoy a high standard of living, with a life expectancy higher than the national average and higher access to high standards of education, training, health services, and cultural and recreation opportunities relative to comparable jurisdictions of its size.



Employment rose by 2.6% in the ACT (1.7% in Sydney and 1.8% in the balance of NSW) over the year to the April 2010 quarter. The ACT maintains the lowest unemployment rate in Australia – 3.3% in June 2010¹ compared with 5.2% nationally. This reflects a well-educated and skilled work force with a high proportion of professional and technical skills.

Incomes in the ACT are also well above the national average. The latest data shows that average weekly earnings in the ACT in May 2010 were \$1,388.30 for males, \$1,016.70 for females and \$1,196.50 for all employees. These wage rates compare with the Australian average of \$1,191.30 for males, \$768.10 for females, and \$982.80 for all employees².

Canberra's business mix reflects its role as a centre of government and a large regional city, with some 24,492 businesses registered in the Territory as at the end of June 2007.

At the 2006 Census there were 182,000 jobs in the ACT, with 18,400 people coming in from neighbouring areas – mostly from Queanbeyan, with only around 6,000 from the other surrounding LGAs. More recent statistics refer to the ACT as having a resident workforce of 192,000, with approximately 31,800 people working in the ACT but resident outside the ACT, and as many as 10,000 from outside the ACT/Queanbeyan region working regularly in the ACT. Sixty percent of the ACT's employed residents work in the private sector, 31% for the Commonwealth Government and 8.3% for state and territory governments (Feb 2008)³.

The Territory's population is expected to reach 500,000 persons by 2050. It is anticipated that approximately 75% of this growth will be supplied by natural increase (births minus deaths) with the remainder generated by net migration. However this population increase is expected to be accompanied by significant population ageing, typical of projections elsewhere in Australia and throughout the western world.

The April 2010 *CommSec State of the States* economic report ranked the ACT as the number one economy for growth, housing, finance, dwelling starts and equipment investment, and third in relation to construction work. The ACT economy benefited from the earlier than expected national economic recoveries from the global recession, however there remains uncertainty about the magnitude of the effect of the Commonwealth Government's fiscal consolidation on the ACT.

The April 2010 *CommSec State of the States* economic report ranked the ACT as the number one economy for growth, housing, finance, dwelling starts and equipment investment.

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics – Table 11. Labour force status by Sex – Australian Capital Territory – Trend and Original: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6202.0Jun%202010?OpenDocument>

2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Average Weekly Earnings Australia, May 2010, ABS Cat 6302.0, August 2010.

3 ACT Skills Commission Final Report.

This caution reflects the significant role played by the public sector in the ACT economy. The ACT has a resident workforce of 192,000, 31% of whom are employed by the Commonwealth Government, and 8.3% employed by the territory and state governments. The private sector has, however, grown in prominence, with 60% of the ACT's employed residents now working in the private sector, albeit in a largely service-based economy.

There are numerous cross-border issues that benefit from a regional development approach and there are synergies to be achieved through co-operative planning.

Cross Border Relationships

RDA ACT has a strong, well-established relationship with RDA Southern Inland and RDA Far South Coast particularly, which together take in the Local Government Areas in the region around the ACT including Bega Valley, Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma Monaro, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Harden, Palerang, Queanbeyan City, Snowy River, Tumut Shire, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley and Young.

Canberra is the hub of the region and attracts people seeking access to employment, higher order retail and a variety of private and public services – health, education, training, recreation and cultural, and air travel.

The access to ACT services by NSW residents exceeds the access to NSW services by ACT residents and therefore the ACT incurs additional service delivery costs for which it may not be fully reimbursed by NSW. Analysis indicates that the costs of service provision to non-ACT residents will increase in the future, especially for health services, exacerbated by the ageing population.

The ACT is, however, reliant upon the surrounding region in many respects. The region is an important source of labour with approximately 31,800 people working in the ACT but resident outside the ACT. Also, the quality of life of ACT residents is enhanced by access to the rural, coastal and alpine areas of the surrounding region.

The bulk of the ACT's water supply comes from dams within NSW, particularly the Googong Dam, and the ACT relies on power generated from external sources. Access to and from the ACT via road and rail is reliant upon infrastructure funded by the NSW government.

There are numerous cross-border issues that benefit from a regional development approach and there are synergies to be achieved through co-operative planning, particularly in the co-ordination and provision of services and infrastructure. These synergies draw on the relative strengths of the ACT and surrounding region. While the ACT economy is centred on government and higher order services, education and research, the surrounding regions support rural industries and offer both lifestyle and tourism destinations.



Consultation

RDA ACT is tasked with establishing links and co-operative alliances by working closely with the three tiers of government, with business and industry associations, educational institutions and community organisations, to promote regional development and identify key regional priorities and actions. The main stakeholders engaged in this process include the:

- Commonwealth Government, particularly through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government;
- ACT Government, particularly through Business and Industry Development, Chief Minister's Department;
- NSW Department of State and Regional Development and Department of Industry and Investment;
- Other RDAs, most particularly RDA Southern Inland through a *Memorandum of Understanding* signed in May 2010 that sets protocols for both RDAs to work jointly on cross border projects;
- Regional Leaders' Forum co-ordinated through the ACT and NSW governments;
- South Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils, a newly formed organisation which includes representation from the 14 surrounding Local Government Areas; and
- Business and industry associations, research, training and education institutions, and community groups and individuals representing a broad range of focus areas.

The opportunities and challenges that have been identified particularly for the ACT and its region are outlined in Section 4 - The Way Forward. Opportunities are listed under the headings:

- Innovative economy
- Education
- Transport and Infrastructure
- Environment

and the Challenges:

- Communications
- Infrastructure
- Infrastructure Planning
- Employment
- Education
- Sustainability

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Regional Development Australia

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a partnership between the three levels of government – commonwealth, state/territory and local, formed to provide long-term, integrated strategic planning that will grow and strengthen Australia's regions and ensure their long-term sustainability and well being.

Australia has been divided into 55 RDA regions, with each region being serviced by an RDA Committee – together they form the national network of RDAs. New South Wales (NSW) is made up of 14 RDA regions, with ACT forming an additional, discreet RDA region.



Each RDA Committee is made up of Members who have been drawn from their local communities – local leaders with broad and diverse skills and experience who have been selected because of their broad understanding of the challenges, opportunities and priorities of their local community, and the strength of their local networks. Their role is to lead regional advocacy and community growth by helping to develop local solutions to local issues. Committee Members are parliamentary appointments, made following an Expression of Interest process.

RDAs build partnerships and collaborate with a broad range of regional development stakeholders across all spheres of government and with local businesses and their associations, educational institutions, community organisations and other regional development organisations to help identify local issues, needs, gaps and duplications, and present innovative solutions to regional development issues.





Regional Development *Australia*

A U S T R A L I A N C A P I T A L T E R R I T O R Y

RDA ACT Focus and Priority Areas

Nine focus areas have been identified for RDA ACT:

- Business/Innovation/Economy – Innovative Economy
- Education/Skills/Training/Employment – Education and Employment
- Environment/Energy/Sustainability/Climate Change – Environmental Sustainability
- Health/Population Growth and Ageing – Serving the Community
- Infrastructure/Telecommunications/Planning – Connectivity and Infrastructure
- Regional Development/Communities/Local Government – Regional Development Governance
- Social Inclusion/Housing/Not for Profits – Community and Housing
- Tourism/Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Transport

Transport, Environment and Education were identified as the priority areas in which the expertise and interests of the interim RDA ACT Committee could most effectively address the opportunities and challenges facing the ACT and region. RDA ACT has focused on these priority areas through the establishment of Sub-Committees in these areas, identifying key issues, outcomes and initiatives to be progressed through leading the collaborative action of stakeholders.

1.2.2 Regional Development Australia Australian Capital Territory

Regional Development Australia ACT (RDA ACT) was incorporated on 28 September 2009, transitioning from its predecessor – the Capital Region Area Consultative Committee (CR-ACC), following a process that began in March 2008 when the newly-elected Labor Government announced that Australia's network of Area Consultative Committees (ACCs) were to transition to become Regional Development Australia (RDA), with a role to be determined following consultation.

RDA ACT has a different scope of operations to CR-ACC, a new role that is strategic rather than projects focused, and an area that no longer includes the surrounding NSW Local Government Areas. The RDA ACT focus is the ACT, although it is recognised that the ACT's borders are 'porous', and so a holistic, regional perspective that incorporates the surrounding region is beneficial, and attention is given to cross-border issues.

Unlike most other RDAs, RDA ACT transitioned directly from an ACC. A nine-member transitional RDA ACT Committee was put in place for some 14 months that incorporated five Members from the old CR-ACC Committee, plus five from the NSW Capital Region Development Board (one Member had served on both committees).

At a Strategic Planning meeting held in November 2009, the RDA ACT Committee established a Vision, Mission and Message:

VISION: *To be a trusted intermediary between government and local communities on regional development planning, programs and initiatives.*

MISSION: *As a key facilitator, RDA ACT will influence the achievement of sustainable enterprise, economic and employment growth and social participation throughout the ACT and the Capital Region.*

MESSAGE: *RDA ACT has a broad community representative role in facilitating communication with and provision of advice to the ACT and Australian Governments on a range of issues with a regional perspective.*

RDA ACT will achieve its vision by providing leadership, direction and assistance in developing network and partnership opportunities with government, business and communities.



1.2.3 New RDA ACT Committee – July 2010

On 16 July 2010, the (then) Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Maxine McKew and ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope announced the ten new Members of the Regional Development Australia ACT Committee which include:

- Mr Craig Sloan - Chair
- Professor Barbara Norman - Deputy Chair
- Ms Christine Macauley
- Mr Des Walsh
- Dr Christopher Bourke
- Ms Jean Hayden
- Ms Jean McIntyre
- Mr David Gregory
- Ms Nargis Carnahan
- Mr Gary Chapman

These Members were formally inducted at a special meeting of the out-going and incoming Committee held on Monday, 19 July 2010 at the Canberra Business Event Centre.

The new Committee, with an identified vision, mission, message, branding, a developing stakeholder network and a *Business Plan* and *Strategic Regional Plan* in place, will drive the work of RDA ACT forward to facilitate a dynamic future for the ACT and region.

1.2.4 RDA ACT Committee (Interim) May 2009 – July 2010

In May 2009, nine Members were appointed to form the first (an interim) RDA ACT Committee, drawn from the seed organisations of the Commonwealth Government funded Capital Region Area Consultative Committee, and the NSW and ACT Government funded Capital Region Development Board.

The interim Committee term began concurrent with the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding* between the Commonwealth and ACT governments that signalled formal agreement to establish and jointly fund RDA ACT, and concluded in July 2010 with the appointment of the new RDA ACT Committee.



A *Memorandum of Understanding* between the Commonwealth and ACT Governments was signed on 25 May 2009 by the (then) Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development Gary Gray, and ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope.



Mr Ross Barrett – Chair

Ross's extensive engineering and industry experience facilitates his work as Chair of Community Housing Canberra, as National President of the Civil Contractors Federation, and as a Board member of the Master Builders Association of Australia Inc., the Civil Contractors Federation of Australia and the MBA Group Training (ACT) Inc.

Ross is also President of the Master Builders Association of the ACT, a Member of the Board of Trustees – Master Builders Fidelity Fund ACT and a Member of the Residential Advisory Committee – ACT Planning and Land Authority. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Engineers Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Mr David Malloch – Deputy Chair

An experienced Director and Chief Executive, David Malloch is Director and Vice President of the NSW Business Chamber, a Director of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce and a Director of the Australian Business Foundation. He is also Chair of Capital Angels and Director of the Australian Association of Angel Investors and of Intelledox.

David is Chief Executive Officer of Malloch Digital Design, specialising in the design and manufacture of microprocessor-based security-related equipment. He is a Member of various professional associations including the NSW Business Chamber, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Canberra Business Council.



Ms Faye Powell – Secretary

Faye Powell has a strong track record in the transport, information technology and project management fields in both the private and public sectors. She is currently a consultant on transport and infrastructure projects for GHD Pty Ltd on a casual basis as she transitions from full-time work to retirement.

Faye currently contributes to Heart Foundation programs with involvement in walking infrastructure, planning and promotion. She has a special interest in walking advocacy, heritage presentation and encouraging people, especially minority groups, to enjoy the outdoors.





Mr David Gregory – Treasurer

David Gregory is a business development consultant with a specific interest in the food and fibre sector. He has spent 25 years working with food and fibre businesses and networks and their supply chain partners to develop innovation in business and marketing. His special area of interest is agribusiness marketing through value chain development. He has recently completed research on cooperation and collaboration through the chain as a business strategy to achieve better outcomes for pastoral industry products. This research supports a more customer oriented business model for Australia's rural businesses.

David divides his time between Canberra and his beef production enterprise near Braidwood.



Dr Christopher Bourke

Dr Christopher Bourke has conducted a private dental practice in Canberra for the past 15 years, and assists at local community level through pro bono work undertaken at the Queanbeyan Public Dental Clinic. His employment history is extensive, covering both the public and private sectors and including Aboriginal community organisations; he was also an ALP candidate for the 2008 ACT Assembly election.

Chris graduated from Melbourne University in 1982, the first Aborigine to complete a dental degree. He is currently President of the Indigenous Dentists' Association of Australia and a member of the Capital Arts Patrons Organisation, the Neville Bonner Scholarship Committee and the Campaign for Indigenous Health Equality.



Ms Marita Corra

Marita Corra is Director and Business Manager of Inland Trading Co (Australia), a Canberra-based business which has won numerous business and exporting awards. She was involved in the foundation and establishment of the company, initiating a focus and vision that has ensured the company's robust reputation and enabled it to quickly become a key player in the global wine industry.

Marita has strong involvement with the small business sector on a local, national and international level. She has both judged and organised government Business and Export Awards; she is also involved with the International Business Taskforce and Sydney Music Arts and Culture (SMAC).



Ms Diane Hinds

Diane Hinds is Proprietor and Co-Director of the Old Bus Depot Markets. This is a quality, national award-winning weekly Sunday market held in Kingston ACT that focuses on the creativity and talents of the people in the Canberra region. Inducted into the Australian Tourism Hall of Fame in 2006, it is both a part of the cultural fabric of the ACT, and a national tourist attraction.

Diane is an experienced urban and social planner who has had professional involvement supporting ACT's business and tourism sectors. She is also a Member of the Australian Planning Institute, the National Capital Attractions Association and the ACT and Region Tourism Industry Council.



Professor John H. Howard

John is Pro Vice Chancellor, Development, at the University of Canberra, responsible for the development and management of Business and Government Partnerships, Knowledge Transfer and Community Engagement. Previously he has been involved in public policy research and management consulting, completing significant projects in the area of innovation policy research, analysis and advice.

John is also a member of the Board of the Canberra Business Council and Epicorp. He Chairs the Canberra Convention Bureau's Research and Learning Institutes Group and represents the University in the Commonwealth-funded Centre for Excellence in Local Government and the Enterprise Connect Creative Industries Innovation Centre.



Ms Elizabeth Brown

Elizabeth Brown is Executive Officer and Regional Arts Development Officer at Southern Tablelands Arts NSW. She has been involved in the community cultural development and tourism areas for some twenty years, and has extensive experience in cultural planning, public art policy, project development and implementation and event management.

While based in Goulburn, Elizabeth currently works across the Southern Tablelands and Highlands and is a member of many of the region's arts groups. She works in close contact with regional communities seeking innovative and exciting ways to develop their skills, audiences and programming.



1.2.5 Regional Development Australia ACT in the context of the surrounding region

Given the importance of the ACT in the context of its region, RDA ACT works closely with regional organisations, including RDA Southern Inland (SI), RDA Far South Coast (FSC) and RDA Illawarra. RDA ACT also participates in the Regional Leaders' Forum, and is currently discussing inclusion in other regional development bodies such as the NSW Illawarra and South East Economic Development and Environment Cluster Regional Managers' Network, and the newly formed South Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils.

RDA ACT is the 'hole in the donut' of the RDA Southern Inland region.



Members of the RDA ACT and RDA SI Committees have agreed that both RDAs will work together to present and enhance a regional perspective, and to identify potential projects on which the two RDAs can work together. A *Memorandum of Understanding* between RDA ACT and RDA SI was signed in May 2010 that sets out a protocol for these two RDAs to work jointly on cross border projects.



Regional Leaders' Forum (RLF) - organised through the ACT Government's Chief Minister's Department and the NSW Government, the RLF is held twice a year, attended by the ACT Chief Minister, NSW Government representatives and the Mayors and General Managers of the 14 surrounding Local Government Areas. The agenda covers a broad range of cross border issues, and includes the presentation of the *State of the Environment Report* by the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

NSW Illawarra and South East Economic Development and Environment Cluster Regional Managers' Network - the responsibility of the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Industry and Investment.

South Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (SEROC) - the newly formed SEROC (inaugural meeting held 14 May 2010) includes the Local Government Areas of Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma Monaro, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Harden, Palerang, Queanbeyan City, Snowy River, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley and Young, designed to facilitate the sharing of resources and co-ordination of a regional voice.



2 The Australian Capital Territory

Canberra is unique ...

Canberra is unique in Australia in that it is:

- the nation's capital and the seat of national government;
- an inland city that was planned around its bush setting - designed by Walter Burleigh Griffin in 1912, with its major roads largely built to his 'wheel-and-spoke' pattern, rather than a grid;
- a 'city state' where the Assembly performs both state/territory and municipal functions, and the ACT land is governed by both the ACT and Commonwealth governments; and
- a major regional centre for south-east NSW, providing a hub of educational, health, entertainment and retail facilities. It is the home of many nationally significant social and cultural institutions such as the High Court, National Museum, National Gallery and National Library of Australia, and numerous Commonwealth Government departments (Canberra's largest employer).



Source: ACTMAPi - Online Maps of Canberra and the ACT, produced by ACTPLA, Electronic Business Service, <http://www.actmap.i.act.gov.au/framesetup.asp>

The *Mercer Worldwide Quality of Living Survey* ranked Canberra 26th globally, the fourth highest ranked Australian city behind Sydney (10th), Melbourne (18th) and Perth (21st) – the annual survey evaluated 420 cities worldwide (and ranked Vienna as the world's most liveable city). This is the first time Canberra has been included in this survey which ranks cities on a variety of criteria including: economic stability, infrastructure and transport facilities, crime rates and its relative strength in areas of education, the environment (Canberra was rated 21st in the world's top 100 eco-cities), housing, sporting facilities and even the range and quality of restaurants, theatres and cinemas¹.

¹ Media Release, Jon Stanhope: *Canberra Ranked Amongst the World's Most Liveable Cities*, 27 May 2010.



2.1 Geography

The RDA ACT region is the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), with the nation's capital city of Canberra as its focus – the urban area of Canberra covers a third of the ACT (just over 800 km²). The ACT is at the centre of the Australian Capital Region which is comprised of the ACT and surrounding 14 Local Government Areas.

Located half way between the Mount Kosciuszko ski fields and the south coast beaches (150 kms inland from the coast), Canberra forms part of the important transport corridor between the major cities of Sydney (280 km NE), and Melbourne (660 km SW). Canberra is Australia's largest inland city, and the eighth largest city overall. It consists of seven town centres, each with some 8 to 25 suburbs. The ACT includes a few rural villages/settlements, a small number of rural properties and an area of uninhabited national park and forestry land.

The site for the Australian seat of government – then called the Federal Capital Territory, was chosen in 1908 and construction commenced nine years later. It provided for the capital to be located in a bushland setting, situated to the north of the Brindabella Ranges on the broad flood plain of the Molonglo River, within the upper Murrumbidgee River Catchment in the Murray-Darling Basin. All land in the ACT is held on 99-year leases from the national government, although the Territory government now administers most leases.

The RDA ACT region is the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), with the nation's capital city of Canberra as its focus



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2.2 Population, Demographics, Projections

The ACT population at December 2009 was 354,900¹, with an annual growth rate of 1.8%.

The ACT has one of Australia's highest rates of long-term population migration, indicating that it has a very transient population. The ACT also has very high levels of short term cross border movements – the highest rate of cross border movements, relative to the size of its population, of any state or territory in Australia², with roughly three times the rate of outflow to the rest of the country.

Growth: The current annual growth rate is 1.8%, however ACT population growth rates are expected to slow more rapidly than nationally over coming decades due to the ACT's small international migration rate (just 0.5% compared with 1.6% of total national population) and an expected downward pressure on interstate migration to the ACT.

The moderate rate of growth overall in the ACT population masks the very high level of 'churn' in the population – with the ACT having a very high rate of in and out migration, and a highly transient population. Between 2001 and 2006 some 117,000 people arrived in Canberra and were 'usual residents' of the ACT by Census night in 2006. This is equivalent to 38% of the usual resident population in 2006. The net growth over this period was 15,852, meaning that some 101,000 people also left the ACT – a figure masked when only the net growth is considered.

People who moved to the ACT between 2001 and 2006 had a younger age profile than that for the Territory as a whole. There is a single age group peak among these newcomers in the age bracket 25 to 34 years. This group typically contains singles or young married couples having no children, or a small number of children.

The northern suburbs experienced the largest population growth in 2008-09: Gungahlin-Hall (7.5%), Belconnen (1.4%) and North Canberra (1.6%), with the lowest growth experienced in the southern suburbs of Tuggeranong (0.2%). The highest population growth rates in the ACT were recorded in Forde, Franklin, Harrison, Amaroo and Nicholls. The combined population of the northern SSDs (179,000) was greater than that of the combined southern SSDs (173,200). The centre of population in the ACT at June 2009 was in the suburb of Yarralumla.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0>

² *The ACT and its region: economic relationships and key drivers of economic growth, a report by Access Economics Pty Limited for the Chief Minister's Department, 2008.*



Density: the ACT has an area of approximately 2400 km² and a population of 354,900 – that gives a population density figure for the ACT of approximately 148 persons per km². The spatial restriction of the border on outward residential development influences the density of the city¹.

It is interesting to compare the population density of the ACT with that of NSW, which has an area of 800,642 km² and a population of 6,967,200 – that gives NSW a population density figure of approximately 8.7 persons per km². Also Tasmania, with an area of 68,401 km² and a population of 505,400 has a population density of 7.3 persons per km².

Consequently, by virtue of the ACT's relatively small land area in comparison to the vastness of the other states, it is reasonable to claim that the ACT is the most densely populated of Australia's states and territories.

However, in a city-by-city comparison, the Sydney LGA has an area of only 26.15 km² with a population of 172,685 – that gives Sydney a population density figure of 6,250 people per km². The Brisbane Local Government Area has an area of 2116 km² with a population of 992,176 so indicates a population density figure of 469 people per km² for Brisbane.

If comparisons are to be made on city boundaries or Local Government Areas, it begs the question ... what is to be taken as the Canberra 'Local Government Area'? The ACT is a city state, and the ACT Government is responsible for the administration and provision of services to the whole of the ACT – from Hall to Tharwa and from Dunlop to Kowen. It is therefore a reasonable proposition that the Canberra 'LGA' includes the whole of the ACT, and this should form the basis for population density comparisons.

The population density of Canberra is 440 people per km² which, relative to other Australian cities is low, but relative to other world cities, is extremely low; for example, compare it with Manila – the most densely populated city in the world, which has 43,079 people per km².

The ACT has a very high rate of in and out migration, and a highly transient population.

¹ Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2008–09, Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue Number 3218.0, 30 March 2010; and Australian Demographic Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue Number 3101.0, September Quarter 2009.



Gender: At 30 June 2009¹, females outnumbered males 177,190 to 174,999 (total 352,189); population proportions by age group were:

- 1 – 14 years: 15.6%
- 15 – 24 years: 16.5%
- 25 – 34 years: 14.8%
- 35 – 44 years: 13.7%
- 45 – 54 years: 10.9%
- 55 – 64 years: 5.7%
- 65 – 74 years: 3.2%
- 75 – 84 years: 1.2%
- 85 years and over: 1.0%

Families: At the time of the 2006 Census, Canberra had 84,509 families, with 33,428 being couple families and 8,951 being one-parent families (with children under 15 and/or dependent students).

Indigenous/Migrants: In 2006, the indigenous population was 1.3% of the total population. 22.9% of the ACT population was born overseas, with the largest proportion of migrants born in Europe (10.9%). The percentage of the total population (aged > 15 years) speaking a language other than English at home was 15.2%.

Ageing: The ACT has a younger population relative to the surrounding region, due to the on-going inflow of relatively younger people as a result of interstate migration, and the relatively high incidence of the outflow of retirees.

Life expectancy: continues to increase – 84 years for women and 80 years for men, and compares favourably with the national average (83 and 78 respectively). There were 4,479 births, 1484 deaths.

ACT Population Projections 2007 to 2056² presents the official ACT Government 2009 population projections for the ACT over the next fifty years, reflecting the changing demographic trends to allow for high quality planning that will meet the needs of the ACT population into the future.

Because the projections are based on assumptions about future trends in fertility, mortality and migration they cannot be viewed as fixed or precise predictions, but rather as indications of population change and its subsequent possible implications for the ACT. Neither should the projections be perceived as government targets, but they can provide a basis for considering the impacts of regional ageing and population growth on ACT service delivery, for example, assessing future land release requirements and planning for housing, schools, public utilities and facilities such as health centres and for aged care.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, ABS Cat 3201.0, December 2009.

² ACT Population Projections 2007 to 2056, ACT Government, Australian Capital Territory, Canberra May 2009.



Some salient points made in the report include:

- The Territory's population is projected to reach 500,000 persons by 30 June 2050.
- It is anticipated that approximately 75% of this growth will be driven by natural increase (births minus deaths), with the remainder to be driven by net migration.
- ACT population growth will vary by age group. Between 2007 and 2056 the number of ACT children (aged 4 years of age and under) is projected to increase by approximately 42%. The younger working age population (aged 18-34 years) is projected to increase by approximately 33%, while the older working age population (aged 35-64 years), is projected to increase by approximately 43%.
- The ACT is expected to experience significant population ageing, with those aged 85 years and over to increase by 509%, reaching 22,500 in 2056.
- The population of persons aged 65 years and over is expected to rise from approximately 10% in 2007, to 20% in 2056. This 'population ageing' is typical of projections elsewhere in Australia, as well as throughout the western world.
- Although the number of persons aged 65 years and over is smaller than the number of children in 2007, the situation will be reversed in 2034, and the difference will continue to grow to 2056.

The Territory's population is projected to reach 500,000 persons by 30 June 2050.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics predicts that the number of people living by themselves in the ACT is projected to rise significantly over the next two decades, with single person households expected to rise in Canberra by up to 88% by 2031. Women living by themselves will constitute the majority, with their number increasing to more than 30,000; men 25,000.

Average household size in the ACT (in line with the rest of Australia) is projected to decline from 2.6 people per household in 2006 to 2.4 people in 2031. Couple families without children are projected to become the most common family type in the ACT by 2013-14, with one-parent families projected to increase at a faster rate than two parent families, from 14,100 in 2006 to some 20,000 in 2031.

2.3 Labour, Economy

The Canberra community's well being is robust; people are economically well-off and have a high standard of living with regard to education levels, health services, life expectancy and general safety¹.

Employment rose by 2.6% in the ACT (1.7% in Sydney and 1.8% in the balance of NSW) over the year to the April 2010 quarter. The ACT maintains the lowest unemployment rate in Australia – 2.7% in May 2008, (compared with 4.2% nationally), and currently at 3.3%. At 30 June 2006, there were 6,055 unemployed persons in the ACT, with an unemployment rate of 3.2%.

Incomes in the ACT are also well above the national average. In 2007-08 the mean weekly household income in the ACT was \$2,100, compared with \$1,649 nationally². Median (or mid-point in the spread of incomes) was lower at \$1,762 (\$1,285 nationally), reflecting the large number of lower income households relative to the small number of very high-income households. As suggested by this difference between the two averages, the ACT had a lower proportion of households relying on government pensions and benefits (12%) than other states (20 to 34%) and the Northern Territory (15%).

The ACT's high household incomes are due to a combination of four main factors:

- Higher labour force participation rate (especially for women) meaning more households have more wage earners;
- Higher wages for women (as more women are working in full-time or better paid part-time work);
- Higher levels of qualifications in general (usually reflected in higher wages); and
- Lower levels of households relying on pensions (not pulling average household incomes down).

The latest data shows that average weekly earnings in the ACT in May 2010 were \$1,388.30 for males, \$1,016.70 for females and \$1,196.50 for all employees. These wage rates compare with the Australian average of \$1,191.30 for males, \$768.10 for females, and \$982.80 for all employees³.

¹ *State of the Environment Report 2007-08* – Australian Capital Territory, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Household Income and Income Distribution 2007-08*, ABS Cat 6523.0, August 2009.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Average Weekly Earnings Australia, May 2010*, ABS Cat 6302.0, August 2010.



Business: Canberra's business mix reflects its role as a centre of government and a large regional city, with some 24,492 businesses registered in the Territory as at the end of June 2007. The largest numbers of businesses are in the Property and Business Services industry (32% of the total), followed by Construction (19%) and Retail (11%).

Industry: 999 private sector houses and 1,867 dwelling units were given building approval. 14,732 new motor vehicles were sold and 221,089 registered, making 661 registered motor vehicles/1000 of the population.

At the 2006 Census there were 182,000 jobs in the ACT, with 18,400 people coming in from neighbouring areas - mostly from Queanbeyan, with only around 6,000 from the other surrounding LGAs. More recent statistics refer to the ACT as having a resident workforce of 192,000, with approximately 31,800 people working in the ACT but resident outside the ACT, and as many as 10,000 from outside the ACT/Queanbeyan region working regularly in the ACT. Sixty percent of the ACT's employed residents work in the private sector, 31% for the Commonwealth Government and 8.3% for state and territory governments (Feb 2008)¹.

As a percentage of total employed persons (Census 2006), the occupation rate (1.4% not categorised) of employed people was:

- Professionals – 29.3%
- Clerical and Administrative Workers – 19.1%
- Managers – 15.4%
- Technicians and Trades Workers – 10.6%
- Community and Personnel Services – 9.0%
- Sales Workers – 7.5%
- Labourers – 5.2%
- Machinery Operators and Drivers – 2.5%

Persons undertaking voluntary work for an organisation - 23.9%, persons caring for their own children without pay - 20.9%, and persons providing unpaid care/assistance to family/others - 10.6%.

The ACT economy has thrived in recent years, with its gross state product for 2006-07 growing by 17.3%. It has a triple-A credit rating resulting in lower borrowing costs for the ACT Government, reducing the tax burden for residents of the ACT, and instilling confidence in the ACT economy leading to consistent growth in the private sector with the number of businesses in the ACT growing to 24,492 in June 2007.

Canberra's business mix reflects its role as a centre of government and a large regional city, with some 24,492 businesses registered in the Territory as at the end of June 2007.

¹ ACT Skills Commission Final Report.

The global recession has had a significant impact on the ACT economy, despite the stabilising effect of government employment and procurement in the region – ACT revenue has been substantially decreased, with reductions that include the loss of half a billion dollars in GST revenue over five years.

Economic Outlook for the ACT: Economic growth in the ACT is forecast to moderate in 2010-2011. Although the prospects for the ACT economy are positive – benefited by the earlier-than-expected global and national economic recoveries, there is still uncertainty about the magnitude of the impact that the Commonwealth Government's fiscal consolidation could have on the ACT¹.

In a Media Release dated 19 April 2010, Katy Gallagher MLA: *ACT Government Support for the Economy pays Dividends*, the ACT Treasurer "welcomed the latest *CommSec State of the States* report which has again ranked the ACT as the best performing economy in the country. According to the report, the ACT occupies the number one position on economic growth, housing finance, dwelling starts and equipment investment. The ACT is in second place on population growth and ranks third in relation to construction work."²



¹ ACT Budget 2010-2011: *A Budget for our Growing City*, released 4 May 2010.

² Media Release, Katy Gallagher MLA: *ACT Government Support for the Economy pays Dividends*,



2.4 Governance

On 1 January 1911, the NSW government ceded its authority over the Capital Territory area (a land area of 2,351.4 km²), and parliamentary power of the Territory was vested in the Commonwealth. In 1938, the Federal Capital Territory officially became the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and was administered by the Federal Government until 1989.

In 1988, the Commonwealth Government legislated for self-governance within the ACT making the ACT a self-governing territory and a separate legal entity. However, the Commonwealth has reserved some Ordinances in areas such as national land and, under the Constitution, the Commonwealth Parliament still retains full legislative capacity with respect to the ACT although these could be seen as reserve powers to be used only in special circumstances.

The government of the ACT is a member of both the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), and serves the purposes of both state and local governments.

There are three arms of governance within the ACT: the Legislature – consisting of 17 members (MLAs) of the Legislative Assembly serving a four-year term (elected under a proportional representation system with five members each from the electorates of Brindabella and Ginninderra, and seven from Molonglo); the Executive (Cabinet) – consisting of the Chief Minister and up to four Ministers appointed by the Chief Minister; and the Judiciary – consisting of the ACT Supreme Court and ACT Magistrates Court.

The ACT Legislative Assembly is unique among Australian parliaments. The ACT is often referred to as a 'city state' because the Assembly performs both state/territory and municipal functions i.e. it will act at a state level in some matters (e.g. education, health, policing), and at a local council level in others (e.g. waste management, road maintenance). The Chief Minister fulfils the roles of both State Premier and Mayor. The ACT Public Service was created on 1 July 1994 with a total of 18,799 staff at 30 June 2006.

The ACT Legislative Assembly is unique among Australian parliaments. The ACT is often referred to as a 'city state' because the Assembly performs both state/territory and municipal functions.



The ACT is, at the time of writing, currently represented in the Commonwealth Parliament by two Members in the House of Representatives: Member for Canberra Annette Ellis, and Member for Fraser Bob McMullen and two Senators: Gary Humphries and Kate Lundy.

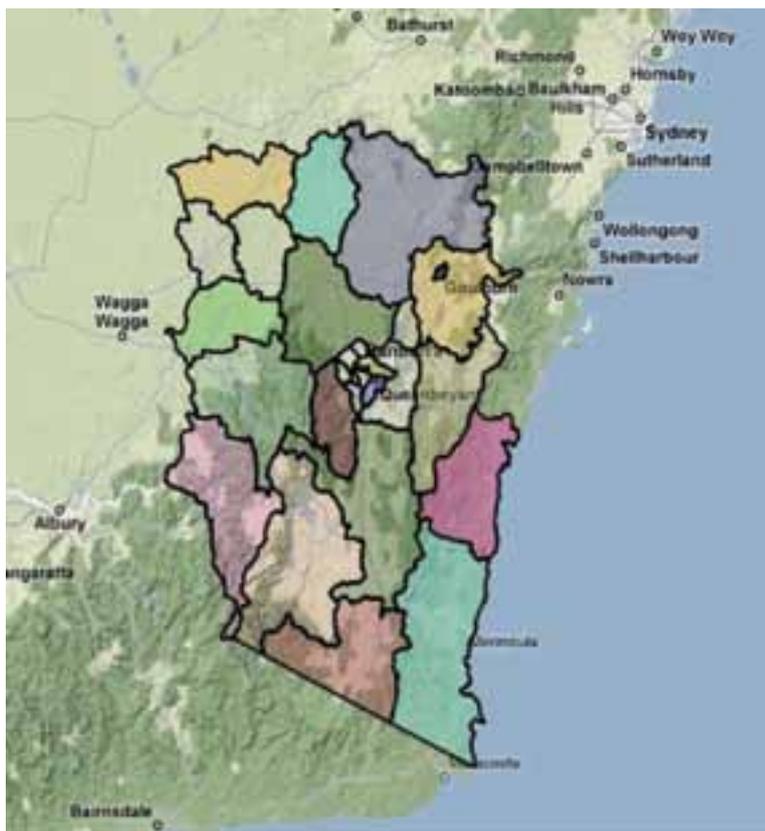
Urban planning: Both the ACT and Commonwealth Governments govern the ACT land - the ACT Government has overall governance of Territory controlled lands and the Commonwealth Government for national lands i.e. the airport; and through the National Capital Authority, designated areas i.e. the Parliamentary Zone.

The Commonwealth's retention of jurisdiction over some areas of Canberra has generated an increasing volume of complaints referring to a perceived resourcing paucity for Canberra by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth funding of Canberra has not been maintained in real terms despite the need to present the city as the nation's capital and the seat of national government.



2.5 The ACT's surrounding region

RDA ACT is a regional organisation, and takes a regional perspective - its local region is the Australian Capital Region (ACR), which includes the surrounding Local Government Areas (LGAs) of: Bega Valley, Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma Monaro, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Harden, Palerang, Queanbeyan City, Snowy River, Tumut Shire, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley and Young.



Source: *The ACT and its region: economic relationships and key drivers of economic growth*, a report by Access Economics Pty Limited for the Chief Minister's Department, 2008, p.2.

The Australian Capital Region covers a total area of 54,815.4 km². Canberra is the largest urban settlement in the region, with which it shares many resources including water catchments, energy and water infrastructure, and labour.

The ACR has an estimated resident population of 541,659 (June 2006), 68% of whom live in the Canberra-Queanbeyan district. Population growth in NSW Local Government Areas (LGAs) located on the borders of the ACT continued in 2008-09, with the population of Queanbeyan increasing by 880 people, Palerang by 410 and Yass Valley by 340.

RDA ACT is a regional organisation, and takes a regional perspective.

ACT residents enjoy higher incomes than people living in the ACR; in fact, household incomes in the ACR are slightly more than half of those in the ACT. In the 2006 Census, median individual income for the ACT stood at \$722 per week, compared to \$466 for Australia and \$448 for the ACR; similarly, the median household income in the ACT was \$1,509/week, Australia \$1,027/week and the ACR \$872/week.

The unemployment rate is significantly higher and participation rates are lower in the ACR. Ageing has also been identified as even more of an issue for the ACR, suggesting that the ACR service population – those in the ACR accessing ACT services, will increase in the future. This has important planning implications.

Canberra is an emporium for the surrounding region – people travel to Canberra to access employment opportunities and a variety of public and private services and facilities e.g. hospitals, schools, and the airport. To a lesser extent, ACT residents travel over the border for a mix of reasons, but often on their way to destinations further afield. More than 75% of workers who travel from interstate to Canberra each day to work (some 25,000–30,000 people) live in the commuter belt that includes Queanbeyan and the semi-rural areas surrounding Canberra. This same region is estimated to be a relatively heavy user of the ACT's service sector.

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2.6 Co-operation and partnerships with the surrounding region

There are numerous cross-border issues that benefit from a regional approach. Such issues arise not only due to the shared geography, but also because the porous ACT borders mean that many residents from the surrounding region travel to Canberra to access the ACT's excellent health, education and tourism facilities. In return, Canberra relies on an influx of workers who commute daily from throughout the region to fill employment requirements (for example, 18,000 of the 25,000 people who make up the Queanbeyan City LGA workforce commute to work in the ACT); to a lesser extent, Canberrans travel out into the local region to enjoy recreational pursuits.

There are synergies to be achieved through co-operative planning particularly in the provision of services and infrastructure. While the ACT economy is centred on government services, education and research facilities, the surrounding region supports rural industries – particularly fine wool and cool climate wines; and both offer outstanding tourism destinations. Another of the many issues impacting on the ACT that flow over the border to similarly impact the surrounding areas (and visa versa) is regional transport infrastructure.

Within the ACR, the Canberra-Queanbeyan Statistical District – that includes Canberra and the Palerang and Queanbeyan City LGAs, is recognised as a particularly important urban planning area. Also, Palerang and Queanbeyan, as well as the Goulburn-Mulwaree LGA, are included in the NSW Government's *Regional Strategy for the Canberra-Sydney Corridor* that caters for a population increase of 46,350 by 2031, and highlights Goulburn, Queanbeyan and Bowral as major centres for employment growth.

Queanbeyan has the strongest regional economy, largely because many ACT workers live there; the ski fields of the Snowy River are also a relatively employment-rich district, whereas Eurobodalla and the Bega Valley have very low employment ratios, partly because this area is popular with retirees, but also due to the collapse of forestry as a major employer over the past decade. The inland farming districts around Goulburn have been weakened by drought, on-going since 2002, and water continues to be a notable constraint to the future growth of the region¹.

¹ See 1307.8 – *Australian Capital Territory in Focus*, 2007.

The ACT's relatively younger population means that the ACT's economy may grow relative to the region over time, and it also changes demand patterns; for example, a higher weighting of older people increases demand for services, particularly public hospitals.

It has long been recognised that the ACT acts as a service centre for the surrounding region, which allows for a more efficient use of resources within Australia. However this process disadvantages the ACT more so than most regions.

ACR service population estimates – excl. ACT	1996	2006	2016	2026
ACR population	205 719	233 561	256 061	279 769
Education - Number of students in ACT	4 135	4 494	4 121	4 054
Health - Number of public hospital separations in ACT	14 282	16 215	17 777	19 423
Health service population - Number of people	68 543	77 820	85 317	93 216
Law and order - Number of defendants ACT magistrates court	2 605	2 958	3 243	3 543
Traffic infringements - Number of people	4 031	4 576	5 017	5 481
Road usage - Cross border vehicle movements per day	109 527	124 350	136 329	148 952
Employment - Number of people working inside the ACT (census)	16 939	19 231	21 084	23 036
ACT service population estimates – only ACT	1996	2006	2016	2026
ACT population	308 251	334 225	373 991	402 264
Education - Number of students in ACT	59 115	55 648	55 294	61 157
Health - Number of public hospital separations in ACT	51 575	55 921	62 574	67 305
Health service population - Number of people	308 251	334 225	373 991	402 264
Law and order - Number of defendants ACT magistrates court	16 633	18 035	20 181	21 706
Traffic infringements - Number of people	38 658	41 915	46 902	50 448
Road usage - Total vehicle movements per day	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Employment - Number of people working inside the ACT (census)	162 586	176 286	197 260	212 173
Combined service population estimates – ACR + ACT	1996	2006	2016	2026
Combined ACT and ACR population	513 970	567 786	630 052	682 033
Education - Number of students in ACT	63 250	60 142	59 415	65 211
Health - Number of public hospital separations in ACT	65 857	72 136	80 352	86 728
Health service population - Number of people	376 794	412 045	459 308	495 480
Law and order - Number of defendants ACT magistrates court	19 239	20 993	23 424	25 250
Traffic infringements - Number of people	42 688	46 491	51 919	55 929
Road usage - Total vehicle movements per day	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Employment - Number of people working inside the ACT (census)	179 525	195 517	218 344	235 209

Source: ACT Government, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, ACT Treasury submission to Commonwealth Grants Commission review 2004, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Special data request Access Economics



The Commonwealth Grants Commission points out:

"The cross border flow of services is in both directions – some NSW residents use ACT services and some ACT residents use NSW services. If the incoming and outgoing flow of services were exactly the same, the net effect would be zero and neither state would incur additional service delivery costs.

However the flow of ACT services to NSW residents far exceeds the flow of NSW services to ACT residents and the ACT incurs additional service delivery costs for which it may not be reimbursed by NSW. In making a cross border assessment, it is the net cross border flow of services that is relevant."

The broad analysis of the differences between the ACT and ACR populations indicate that the costs of service provision to non-ACT residents are going to increase in the future, especially for health services and particularly from the ageing population. However it should be noted that the ageing of the ACR may be augmented by retirees from the ACT.

The bulk of the ACT's water supply comes from dams within NSW, mostly the Googong Dam and the three reservoirs along the Cotter River, and Queanbeyan is also serviced by the ACT water supply. Under the ACT and NSW Government's *Cross Border Water Supply Agreement*, the ACT Government has the power to manage water resources in the Googong Dam, while NSW governs planning, development and environmental management in the wider catchment area surrounding the Dam. This relationship arises from the *Seat of Government Acceptance Act 1909* (Cth), which provides paramount rights to the use and control of waters of the Queanbeyan and Molonglo Rivers and their tributaries which lie to the east of the Cooma-Goulburn railway to the ACT. The provision of water services in the ACT is controlled by ACTEW Corporation, and managed by ActewAGL¹.

Plans for a joint celebration in 2013 of Canberra's Centenary and Queanbeyan's 175th anniversary were discussed in a meeting held earlier this year between ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope and Queanbeyan Major Tim Overall. It was noted that for the first 75 years of Canberra's existence as an urban community, Queanbeyan was the heart of the region, the place where people of this region met, did business and lived social lives². The leaders also agreed to collaborate on a tree-planting, landscaping and beautification project for the Yass Road entrance into Queanbeyan from the ACT.

For the first 75 years of Canberra's existence as an urban community, Queanbeyan was the heart of the region, the place where people of this region met, did business and lived social lives

¹ From ACCESS Economics: The ACT and its region 2008

² Media Release, Jon Stanhope MLA: *Taskforce to drive ACT, QBN transport links*, 26 March 2010.

2.7 A seamless border

An RDA ACT priority is to develop a sense of a seamless border between the ACT and its surrounding regions. This objective highlights the need for significant cross-border communication and consultation on selected priority areas, including transport infrastructure.

RDA ACT is tasked with establishing links and cooperative alliances by working closely with all levels of government to promote regional development, including:

- the Commonwealth Government, particularly the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government;
- the ACT Government, particularly the Chief Minister's Department, Business and Industry, Inter-governmental and Regional Development;
- the NSW Government, particularly the Department of State and Regional Development and Department of Industry and Investment; and
- other regional organisations, including the RDA network.



3 RDA ACT Focus and Priority Areas

At the RDA ACT Strategic Planning meeting held in November 2009, the Committee identified nine focus areas:

- Business/Innovation/Economy
- Education/Skills/Training/Employment
- Environment/Energy/Sustainability/Climate Change
- Health/Population Growth and Ageing
- Infrastructure/Telecommunications/Planning
- Regional development/Communities/Local Government
- Social Inclusion/Housing/Not for Profits
- Tourism/Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Transport

Of these, Education, Environment and Transport were identified as priority areas, and RDA ACT Sub Committees were formed to examine these priorities as areas in which RDA ACT could most effectively address the opportunities and challenges facing the ACT and region. These priority areas have been addressed in more detail in the following Section.

For each of the nine focus areas, RDA ACT has identified objectives shaped by key issues and priorities identified in consultation with stakeholders and review of stakeholder documentation. Prospective actions, partnerships and potential initiatives have been extrapolated and outlined in the following section (and refined into tables – refer to Appendix 5.1), and the new RDA ACT Committee will review these to identify which will be progressed in the future through co-operative partnerships with governments, industry, business, education and community groups.

3.1 Business/Innovation/Economy

It is important to attract skilled workers into the ACT to meet the on-going demand across the spectrum of labour skills.

Context

Unemployment in the ACT remains at a very low level, currently 3.3%, but there is an identified and critical skills shortage that needs to be addressed to progress the ACT economy. The skills shortage is slowing economic growth and is predicted to worsen as baby boomers reach retirement age over the next decade or so.

It is important to attract skilled workers into the ACT to meet the on-going demand across the spectrum of labour skills. This can be achieved through a range of measures that include: supporting current initiatives to attract workers from around Australia by promoting the liveability of Canberra, developing regional transport systems that will facilitate the flow of commuters into Canberra from the surrounding region, and encouraging students into ACT tertiary and training institutions to study that offer defined pathways into the ACT workforce.

Employment

The ACT has low unemployment when compared with the Australian population as a whole - 4% compared with 5.8% (in the March quarter 2010), and a relatively high percentage of the population participating in the work force (59.7% compared with 51.6%)¹.

In terms of employment, the ACT is still largely a government city. In 2008 the ACT had employment for about 70,000 Commonwealth public servants and 19,000 ACT public servants (this is the broader public service that includes teachers, nurses and those in similar occupations who are employed by government) - thus the public service accounts for about 47.5% of total employment. It is important to note, however, that only just over 30% of the entire Commonwealth public sector workforce are employed in the ACT².

Business

As noted earlier, Canberra has a diverse local business mix, with a total of some 24,492 businesses registered in the ACT at the end of June 2007. The ACT has a strongly tertiary, services-based economy, with small proportions of primary and secondary businesses - with just 3.5% of businesses in Manufacturing, and 2.7% in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. The following chart shows that the largest number of businesses are in the Property and Business Services industry (32% of the total), followed by Construction (19%) and Retail (11%).

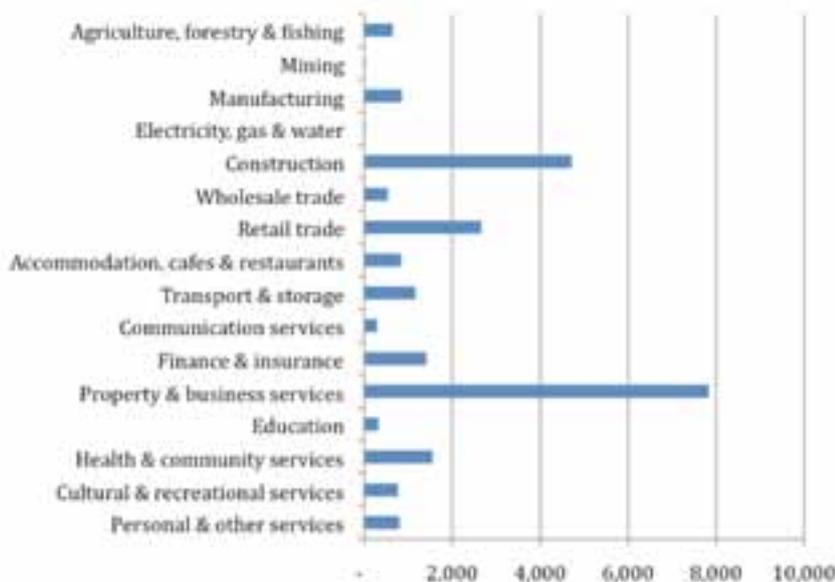
¹ DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets, www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Publications/LabourMarketAnalysis/SmallAreaLabourMarkets-Australia.htm

² Access Economics, op cit



As with most parts of Australia, the business mix in the ACT comprises mostly small and micro businesses (with under 20 or under five staff respectively). Overall, 82% of locally registered ACT businesses had fewer than five staff, another 11% had between five and 19 staff, and another 7% had 20 staff or more. The Commonwealth Government is the largest employer in the ACT, accounting for about 47.5% of total ACT employment.

Business numbers by industry¹



Qualifications

As noted earlier, the ACT has relatively high proportions of higher qualified residents. The following table² shows that at the time of the 2006 Census, some 30% of the ACT population aged over 15 years had a bachelors degree or higher qualification, compared with just over 15% for the nation as a whole.

	% of population > 15 years	
	ACT	Australia
Postgraduate Degree	6.8	2.6
Graduate Diploma and GRaduate Certificate	3.5	1.4
Bachelor Degree	19.7	11.6
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	8.4	7.1
Certificate no defined	1.9	1.7
Certificate III & IV	10.2	13.9
Certificate I & II	1.1	1.1
Level of education inadequately described	1.5	1.5
Level of education not stated	8.1	11.6

¹ Counts of Australian Business 2007 (ABS Cat 8165.0)

² ABS 2006 Census

The Commonwealth Government is the largest employer in the ACT, accounting for about 47.5% of total ACT employment.

The promotion of the education industry in the ACT is vital to the local economy. Nationally, the international education industry is worth more than \$11 billion annually¹. Locally almost 10,000 international students chose to study at ACT education institutions, thereby injecting around \$260 million (2008–09) into the local economy, plus numerous social and cultural benefits². This flow of international students into the region provides not only immediate economic benefits, but also helps students to form enduring ties to this region. The attraction of interstate and local students also adds to the economy – directly and indirectly.

Housing affordability

Canberra has had the second or third highest median housing price in Australia for many years. But it is often noted that Canberra's housing is more affordable than other capital cities. The apparent affordability factor stems from the higher wages earned in the ACT.

While estimates vary, in mid 2010 the median house price in Canberra was estimated at around \$495,000 (by RPData), compared with the national median of \$465,000. As noted earlier, the mean household income in Canberra in 2007–08 was around \$2,100 pw, so adding 5% to account for income growth between then and 2010 gives an estimate for mid-2010 of \$2,205 pw, or \$114,660 pa. The ACT median house price is thus equivalent to 4.3 years of average household income, compared with a national figure of 5.2 years.

The Economy

The ACT is at the hub of the local region economy, and is in a strong position to continue to build the region's economy through building innovative business. It has an established base of high calibre tertiary education institutions and research organisations as well as an emerging cluster of research and development and innovative organisations. The ACT has the most knowledge-intensive regional economy in Australia, with the most highly educated population. The ACT also has close proximity to federal government agencies, and is contained within a geographically small, relatively centralised area conducive to building strong partnerships upon which to build the region's economy.

The global recession has had a significant impact on the ACT economy, despite the stabilising effect of government employment and procurement in the region. ACT revenue has been substantially decreased, with reductions that include the loss of half a billion dollars in GST revenue over five years.

¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia in Brief: Tourism and International Students, viewed 27 July 2010, http://www.dfat.gov.au/aib/tourism_students.html

² ACT Exporters Network, New strategies to benefit the ACT and its international students, viewed 27 July 2010, <http://actexportersnetwork.com.au/2010/05/12/new-strategies-to-benefit-the-act-and-its-international-students/>



Economic Outlook for the ACT: Economic growth is forecast to moderate for the ACT in 2010-2011. Although the prospects for the ACT economy are positive – benefited by the earlier-than-expected global and national economic recoveries, there is still uncertainty about the magnitude of the impact that the Commonwealth Government's fiscal consolidation could have on the ACT¹.

The ACT is well placed to further diversify its economic base and engage in the emerging economy at the forefront of a targeted set of industries or centres of excellence. It is important that innovative and sustainable economies are able to attract and retain talent and skills through the provision of quality communications, infrastructure, housing, education facilities, a safe environment and excellent support services.

Development of the ACT as the 'solar capital of Australia' will have positive flow-on effects for local business, government agencies and individuals. The promotion of sustainable workplace practices in energy choice and use, and the management of waste products will also help to contribute to the sustainability of the ACT. The branding of the ACT as the 'solar capital' would have other advantages, including for the education and tourism sectors, and could help to grow a niche economy in the ACT that will provide opportunities for employment and investment in the ACT and region, and perhaps a specialised sustainability degree unique to the area.

The ACT has the most knowledge-intensive regional economy in Australia, with the most highly educated population.

RDA ACT Business/Innovation/Economy Objectives

- ★ Attract skilled workers to participate in the ACT labour force to alleviate the on-going skills shortages.
- ★ Progress projects that will stimulate economic growth for the ACT economy and encourage business development in the ACT and region.
- ★ Encourage ACT and region businesses to adopt environmentally sustainable practices that will enhance their business operations.

¹ ACT Budget 2010-2011

Prospective Actions

- ★ Support current initiatives to attract skilled workers and their families to live in the ACT to help meet the demand for skilled labour across a range of sectors.
- ★ Support projects that encourage regional students into ACT tertiary education and training institutions by promoting studying opportunities and facilitating support for students through their studies; e.g. student accommodation.
- ★ Investigate development of ICT precincts in partnership with universities and businesses to capitalise on the ACT's highly educated population and the knowledge-intensive regional economy.
- ★ Investigate a project concept to encourage the provision of affordable short-term hostel-style accommodation that could be made available to skilled workers (trades) coming to the ACT to take up shorter-term contract employment.

- ★ Develop a regional branding initiative (local produce, low food miles) – geographically define the 'ACT and region'; identify stakeholders and facilitate engagement and collaboration between local region food and wine producers and a centre that can co-ordinate distribution of their local-region branded/labelled produce to local retailers and tourism outlets.
- ★ Facilitate a case study to develop a supply chain/cluster for regional food and wine products, to be promoted and marketed by local retailers as gourmet produce with low food miles.
- ★ Promote the ACT as the centre for national business, providing facilities for local, regional, national and international networking and major events.

- ★ Promote environmentally sustainable practices to ACT and region small and medium sized businesses. Link these businesses with information and networks that will assist them to adopt environmentally sustainable practices while increasing profits.
- ★ Explore the concept of a Green ✓Tick project that would formally recognise and promote local and regional businesses that adopt sustainable practices.



Potential Initiatives

- ★ Support the ACT Government program – *Live in Canberra*, designed to attract skilled workers and their families to the ACT by promoting Canberra's advantages: lifestyle, employment, education and health facilities, at appropriate national forums e.g. the Country and Regional Expo, held 6-8 August 2010, Sydney.
- ★ Support regional transport initiatives that will facilitate access to the ACT by skilled workers from the region – see the Transport focus area for more information.
- ★ Liaise with other stakeholders to explore ways to assist regional students to study at the ACT's educational institutions (financial assistance, supported accommodation) and help to provide pathways that encourage students to stay on and take-up employment as part of the ACT workforce.

Tertiary Education Promotion – the ACT Exporters Network, Canberra Business Council, ACT Government and a number of other stakeholders commissioned the ACT Education Services Export Strategy report to better understand the contribution international students make to the ACT economy each year. Four approaches were recommended to enhance promotion and student perception: building collaboration and capacity, improving the student experience, creating a brand for Canberra as Australia's education capital, and strengthening infrastructure and support¹. Outcome: to facilitate a cohesive approach by all parties to supply international students with high-quality education, welfare and socio-cultural experiences.

- ★ Identify the areas of greatest skills need in the ACT and region, and link with tertiary institutions to assist them to meet the educational/training needs and fill these gaps.

¹ ACT Exporters Network, New strategies to benefit the ACT and its international students, viewed 27 July 2010, <http://actexportersnetwork.com.au/2010/05/12/new-strategies-to-benefit-the-act-and-its-international-students/>

- ★ An ACT and region Food Cluster project concept – Wayne Street, Street Ryan gave a presentation to the RDA ACT Committee on prospects for a provincial food type initiative in the ACT and region that has a supply chain progression for participating regional businesses (i.e. a business cluster of ACT and region food and wine producers) that sell produce directly to a local distribution centre for retailing by local supermarkets with regional branding. Stakeholders could include Australian Capital Tourism, Capital Region Tourism, Tourism NSW, the Canberra Wine Industry Association, Farmers' Markets stallholders – participating businesses need to have the potential to develop produce in some volume and with consistent supply. Marketing could be organized through a local supermarket chain such as IGA. Outcome: support local producers, businesses and regional tourism.
- ★ Progress the development of Capital Food and Wine Trails; expand on projects already in place such as Poacher's Way, Hills of Hall and Urban Wine Trail.
- ★ Support the proposal for an 'Australia Forum' for Canberra – a Centre for Significant Events, Meetings and Dialogue in the Nation's Capital, a project supported also by The Canberra Business Council to facilitate development of an events centre in Canberra that would raise Canberra's profile and provide facilities for major national and international events that would otherwise need to be located elsewhere in Australia. The alignment of such significant events with the nation's capital and seat of Parliament would be appropriate. Outcome: to provide a venue that would enable Canberra to host major national and international events, as befits the nation's capital.
- ★ Promote the ACT region as the 'solar capital of Australia' with benefits for business, government, educational institutions and individuals. Linking research, development and implementation with tourism, employment and educational opportunities will ensure efficient implementation of solar technologies and sustainable practices across the ACT region. Outcome: to facilitate the implementation of solar technologies and sustainable practices so that the ACT becomes a national showcase for environmentally sustainable practices and green energy.



- ★ Organise and sponsor a Business in Focus Month event with the topic: Going Green – what's in it for you?, designed to provide information and precedents to ACT and region small to medium-sized businesses to encourage adoption of environmentally sustainable practices that will also increase profits.
- Facilitate the project concept for an ACT Region Business Sustainability Learning Network, with the aim of providing skills and knowledge that will grow the capacity, innovation and sustainability of ACT and region for small to medium-sized businesses, while working towards achieving a zero-carbon Canberra by 2060.



BUSINESS IN FOCUS MONTH

Event presentation by Regional Development Australia ACT –

Topic: **Going Green – What's In It For You?**

For: small to medium-sized business owner/manager/operators in the ACT and region

Increase your business income and help the environment! Come along to this exciting forum for small to medium sized businesses and hear about how other local businesses have adopted environmentally sustainable practices that have built their business profits.

The ACT and Commonwealth Governments will also be there to provide information on programs currently available to support green business practices.

The event concludes with a networking session over a light supper.

Date: 20 September 2010

Time: 5.30 to 7.00 pm – formal program; followed by ...
7.00 – 8.00 pm – networking supper

Speakers: Haydn Lowe - Wollemi Systems
Warren Overton - Viridis E3
Janet Jeffs - Ginger Catering

Facilitator: Mark Spain, Global Learning

Bookings are essential (for catering purposes) by cob Tuesday, 14 September

Contact: Liz Veitch at liz.veitch@rdaact.org.au or phone 02 6173 7004

More information: www.rdaact.org.au

3.2 Education/Skills/Training/Employment

Context

The ACT has a fortunate supply of high quality tertiary education and training facilities.

The ACT has a fortunate supply of high quality tertiary education and training facilities, including the Australian National University, University of Canberra, Australian Catholic University, Canberra Institute of Technology, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy and the Royal Military College, plus a number of research institutions such as the CSIRO and National ICT Industry Alliance (NICTIA). The established base of high calibre tertiary education institutions and research organisations are attracting an emerging cluster of R&D and innovation organisations to Canberra. This provides an opportunity to link R&D firms and innovation organisations with universities to present opportunities for the emergence of innovative thinking and world-class ideas. Directing the location of R&D firms and innovative organisations within university campuses, or creating neighbouring intelligent precincts, will allow value adding, resource sharing and cross promotion.

Commuter regions around the ACT are important for providing skills to the ACT. Good workers can be hard to find, and skill shortages will remain a challenge over the coming decade as baby boomers retire. Therefore the ACT Government could examine measures to make trans-border movements easier for people who want to supply the ACT labour market¹ i.e. provide good transport links for commuters. The benefits of making it easier to travel across the border to encourage skilled workers from surrounding commuter areas outweighs the disadvantages this might cause such as an increase in the use of ACT services.

The ACT has a high retention rate of secondary students participating in late secondary/college level schooling. The ACT Budget provides an additional \$59.4 million for the education of ACT students, bringing the total ACT education budget to a record \$502.1 million².

The ACT is facing a crisis precipitated because a very large cohort of workers is due to retire within the next 5–10 years. The Government will spend \$43.2 million over five years to help mature-aged people to stay in particular industries, to re-train, or to move to a supervisory or training role. The *Australian Financial Review* reported on 12 May that the initiative recognises that increasing labour market participation by older workers will assist the country's economic growth and mitigate the effects of Australia's ageing population³.

¹ *The ACT and its region: economic relationships and key drivers of economic growth*, a report by Access Economics Pty Limited for the Chief Minister's Department, 2008.

² Media Release, Katy Gallagher MLA: *2010–11 Budget: A Budget for our Growing City*, 4 May 2010.

³ *ALGA News: 14 May 2010, Incentive for the mature-aged to work longer.*



The ACT *Skills Commission Final Report*¹ outlined the extent of the shortage of skilled workers available in Canberra. The continued expansion of CIT campuses to include trade schools and training centres will go some way to provide for future skill needs, but the immediate future is still in need. In response to this Report, the ACT is developing strategies to address the local impact of the national skills shortage by:

- developing a flexible vocational education system with a wider range of career and education options – pathways for students from secondary school and college to further study or work; and
- providing infrastructure improvements for schools, new schools, information technology upgrades, new curriculum framework, and a focus on teacher quality.

The ACT Government's *Live in Canberra* program has promoted Canberra's employment, lifestyle and education advantages to skilled workers around the nation at the National Careers and Employment Expos. The program is aimed particularly at encouraging skilled workers to come and live in Canberra and capitalise on Canberra's lifestyle benefits: less traffic and congestion, good access to nature, yet with all the advantages of city living. Canberra is promoted as one of the best cities to raise a family in Australia, with a first-rate education system and a great range of sport and recreation facilities, plus opportunities to study at one of the numerous education or training institutions². The ACT has a strong employer base in two levels of public service (Commonwealth and ACT), research organisations, and national and international organisations.

The ACT may seek to position itself as a centre of excellence in a number of areas – information communication technologies (ICT) and environmental sustainability, and will therefore need to ensure an on-going supply of highly skilled workers. The Canberra Business Council (CBC) has highlighted the benefits of enhancing an already well-established ICT sector in the ACT³. To transition towards the New Economy, whereby the knowledge-intensive services sector is becoming dominant as a substantial source of growth and productivity, the ACT region is in a unique position, as it is the most knowledge-intensive regional economy in Australia. To capitalise on these competitive advantages in a sustainable manner, CBC calls for an efficient regional ICT Information Infrastructure Plan (I3P) to be developed, rather than allowing the implementation of critical information infrastructure to be developed in a disjointed, ad-hoc manner.

Good workers can be hard to find, and skill shortages will remain a challenge over the coming decade as baby boomers retire.

¹ *ACT Skills Commission Final Report*, ACT Government, Australian Capital Territory, Canberra, April 2008.

² Media Release, Jon Stanhope MLA, *First Time Visit to Melbourne for Live in Canberra*, 17 May, 2010.

³ Canberra Business Council 2009, *ICT Information Infrastructure for the ACT and the Capital Region*, CBC, Canberra.

The ACT may seek to position itself as a centre of excellence in a number of areas - information communication technologies (ICT) and environmental sustainability, and will therefore need to ensure an on-going supply of highly skilled workers.

The CBC presents a case for the ACT Government to collaborate with CBC, the Australian Information Industry Association, and other relevant stakeholders including the Commonwealth Government and local research and educational institutions, to proceed with the development of an *ICT Information Infrastructure Plan for the ACT and region* as a matter of urgency and high priority. The immediate development of a plan is necessary to coordinate the several commonwealth initiatives that are currently being implemented to produce an efficient outcome for the ACT economy in the medium and long term. These include:

- delivery of the National Economic Stimulus Package which includes up to \$1.6 billion in infrastructure expenditure in the ACT over the next four years;
- roll-out of the \$4.7 billion National Broadband Network (NBN), the first stage of which is planned for early 2010;
- implementation of a range of *Gershon Review* recommendations by the Federal Government; and
- The Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO) Data Centre Strategy, which is in the process of being developed.

There is also a range of general economic development activities across Australia in both the public and private sectors that will benefit significantly from, or require as part of their implementation, the utilisation of ICT in an efficient and coordinated manner. CBC believes that successful development of a plan will lead to the following benefits to the ACT region:

- greatly enhanced economic and social growth in the ACT. This will put the region into recovery from the downturn at a faster rate, and increase both savings and taxation revenue to the ACT Government allowing faster recovery from forecast Budget debt;
- improved service delivery to ACT and region residents and businesses;
- more public and private investment attracted and retained in the region;
- the ACT's carbon emissions would be reduced and the ACT could lead by example in demonstrating environmentally sustainable economic growth;
- a sufficient ICT talent pool would be ensured to meet the ACT's needs in the future and thus prevent potential bottlenecks of economic growth in the region;



- the functional capabilities of the educational, research, public sector and defence industries that are central to the ACT economy would be enhanced, boosting the ACT's reputation as a Knowledge-Based Economy; and
- a range of new business models could become viable.

RDA ACT endorses this focus on the ICT sector as a key component of a strategy to render the ACT as a centre of excellence as a knowledge-intensive regional economy closely aligned with the Commonwealth Government and representatives of a large range of foreign countries.

Regional Development Agencies have been developed in the UK to create clusters of business and commercial development that take advantage of existing or improved characteristics of specific regions and thus create economic hubs. Professor Tim Wilson, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hertfordshire UK, delineated the potential for universities to contribute to or even partner in the development of enterprising economies¹. Some forward-thinking universities are envisaging broadened roles to create and take advantage of competitive advantages by unclustering their activities.

Universities long outlive businesses and are often the longest standing institutions in their communities. Universities contribute by fostering the flow of ideas, opportunities for collaboration, innovation and thinking in different directions. The partnership element involves a role in facilitating the formation of clusters – industries in the same generic fields locating close to one another, and accessing specialist skills and intellectual expertise from the local communities. Making the new economies sustainable means they must not be dependent on subsidy; they must attract wealth-creating industries and companies to be successful in the long term. Universities can play a key role in developing and enhancing the supply of those specialist skills and intellectual expertise. Enterprising economies require local wealth-creating businesses providing a diversity of employment opportunities and people.

What is required in the ACT is a different approach to resource availability. Already in the ACT there is a focus on knowledge-based resources. This needs to be diversified with elements of talent, partnership, enterprise and entrepreneurship, and with the ability to adapt to new and changing markets.

Regional Development Agencies have been developed in the UK to create clusters of business and commercial development that take advantage of existing or improved characteristics of specific regions and thus create economic hubs.

¹ The 2008 Vice-Chancellor's Lecture – *Enterprising Economies: The real university challenge*, October 2008

The interaction between enterprise-focused civic leadership, proactive universities and knowledge-based companies can create a sustainable innovative economy.

Key factors in creating diversity in an enterprise economy are the people in the business involved, and the skills they offer. The community, in addition to the businesses, must offer incentives to attract and retain talent. These incentives include high quality community infrastructure, quality housing, a safe environment, good education facilities and excellent leisure facilities.

In the ACT economy there is an emphasis on services rather than manufacturing or exploitation of natural resources. The export of skills and education as a sub-sector of services is of growing importance, hence the increasing contribution that can be played by the tertiary education sector in meeting the needs, and even enhancing the growth and effectiveness, of the ACT economy.

Professor Wilson maintains that the interaction between enterprise-focused civic leadership, proactive universities and knowledge-based companies can create a sustainable innovative economy. The local universities can continue to pursue different missions, but some degree of complementarity is essential. In a knowledge economy, Wilson maintains that modern universities have a number of roles:

- knowledge creation and exploitation,
- innovation and the application of expertise,
- promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship,
- creating a knowledge-based society, and
- equipping people with leading-edge skills and cultural awareness,

but that no one university can fulfil these roles. Each one must commit to a partnership with civic leaders, and seek to exploit their individual strengths.

At a more practical and immediate level, the linkages between educational courses and institution offerings in the ACT and the potential to strengthen the ACT's economy needs to be explored, along with the medium-term needs of the ACT labour market and the extent to which current education providers are able to meet the challenges of demographic change and economic evolution. This exploration should also take a regional perspective on the availability of qualified, skilled workers for the ACT region, and on the ability of education providers in the ACT to meet the needs of people in the ACT labour catchment. It should also seek to identify and explore how to address the disparity of training support offered to ACT residents, as distinct from that offered to NSW residents.



The ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACTCCI) has identified the current skill shortages in a number of industry sectors, recognising the dynamic nature of the shortages, and warning of a skills crisis caused by the impending retirement (over the next 5 to 10 years) of a very large cohort of 'baby-boomer' workers in the ACT. The retirement of this group will result in the removal of up to 40,000 people from the local labour force.

It is therefore pertinent that consideration should be given to developing and implementing an updated version of the ACTCCI's Silver Lining Project - designed to encourage mature employees and retirees to remain as productive elements in the local workforce and to encourage local employers to recognise the benefits of retaining or re-employing mature workers.

The ACTCCI has expanded its concern regarding a skills shortage to include a population shortage. It considers that the supply of workers from the resident population is insufficient to meet the needs of government, commerce and industry. If the local community is to be relied on to supply the growing needs of an emerging economy model with an increasing focus on high-tech industries, trades and professions, then measures need to be taken to generate the required cohort of employees.

RDA ACT notes the Federal Treasury philosophy of the need to 'import' younger taxpaying workers to support funding for the expected huge increase in retirees. The difficulty with relying upon importation of workers to fill the labour shortfall is that it triggers a focus on the barriers: housing, service delivery and transport. The current problem of housing affordability will worsen when the huge increase in retirees creates a decrease in the average income. The rising cost of living may well result in disincentives for skilled people to move into Canberra.

The ACTCCI has identified a number of issues relevant to the education sector that have an impact on the supply of entrants into the trades and professions (locally and regionally):

- Only a handful of college and secondary school students are completing Advanced Maths as a subject - a prerequisite for engineering, science-based professions, performing arts (music) and a growing number of specialised trades including refrigeration engineering. Students continuing with their education who lack this level of maths education are required to undertake additional bridging courses involving additional expense and time to complete their post-secondary education. (There are plans for establishing colleges specialising in maths, sciences and performing arts in both the north and south of Canberra.)

- The paucity of trainee/apprenticeship wages creates a significant disincentive for potential entrants into a number of trades, further exacerbating major skills shortages in those areas. In addition to this, poorly paid trainees and apprentices cannot afford local accommodation and this significantly impacts on trainees/apprentices from regional areas for whom more specialised training facilities are not available locally.
- There is insufficient information available to potential entrants into trades and professions about the actual working conditions, rewards and responsibilities involved in an employment role throughout a career lifecycle, despite the existence of an on-line resource - *My Future Guide*. This results in a significant number of graduates with specialised education and training not following the trade/profession relating to their education/training. A concern expressed by industry organisations in Canberra is that the public services (both Commonwealth and ACT) are able to attract a very large proportion of the emerging workforce from local and interstate education and training outlets. This is partly due to local industry being unable to match the remuneration and conditions offered by the public services. It is recommended that an information campaign be developed to alert and advise both parents and students about the lifestyle potential and opportunities of various trades and professions.
- Industry organisations recognise that the majority of businesses in the ACT, mostly small business, do not have the capacity to suggest and offer solutions to prospective employees on career paths relevant to their trades/professions. Furthermore a potential solution to improving the attraction and retention of trainees/apprentices, through a group training scenario, is impeded by heavy cost constraints imposed on the group training organisation or supporting industry association.

www.shahrsazionline.com



The case for equipping the ACT to ensure that skills 'to underwrite the industries of the future' concentrate on high-tech, low carbon driven growth was backed up by a Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills report to the UK Government¹. It focuses on a closer matching of the skill needs of business with the expectations of learners, and outlines that an education system more closely aligned with the demands of the market has four elements:

- ensuring that the supply of skills matches demand;
- ensuring that the skills delivered have economic value for employers and that productivity is raised as a result of training or education;
- ensuring that students are assisted/encouraged to improve their employability, progress and earning outcomes from training (through integration of employment needs and skills training); and
- seeking progress in raising national skills to a world class level (particularly through using industry-approved vocational qualifications as a prime indicator).

This modern approach to education and training initiatives features themes of high-tech and low carbon and is a way forward for the ACT education market. The ACT is ideally placed as a major regional centre to capitalise on this approach having access to a wealth of tertiary education facilities and research institutions in a knowledge-based environment.

Key risks of inaction or slow response to the changing market demands include being overshadowed by other competitive areas in Australia that may attract the bulk of limited support available. Canberra could lose the initiative of attempting to position itself as the prime region of excellence in meeting the education and training needs of an emerging economy model, or as a region promoting leadership in environmental sustainability, thus impeding the attraction of the region as a centre of excellence and the rate of growth of the desired industry sectors. This in turn could lessen support for innovative projects such as the High Speed Rail and the Airport freight hub which have synergies with centres of excellence.

Barriers to a timely response include the likelihood of a slow pace of change within education/training institutions, the failure to establish the high-level themes of centres of excellence, the impending departure of a very large (baby boomer) component of the Canberra workforce, and the cost of establishment for 'imported' workers. The solutions also come with a cost and there is a need to compete against other initiatives and claims for support.

The ACT is ideally placed as a major regional centre to capitalise on having access to a wealth of tertiary education facilities and research institutions in a knowledge-based environment.

¹ Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills 2009, *Skills for growth – the national skills strategy*, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, UK.

A Gap Analysis reveals that both short and longer term strategies for action are needed, initially to address the current skill and population shortages, and then to prepare for an emerging economy model, and finally to address the crisis of the departure of the baby boomers.

RDA ACT, in the context of developing a framework for a Strategic *Regional Plan*, supports the goals of creating centres of excellence in selected areas to favourably position Canberra as a place to live, work, invest, learn and play, as well as providing leadership for other communities within Australia.

Objectives

- ★ Address the ACT skills shortage by encouraging increased participation in tertiary education and essential trades.
- ★ Promote the ACT to interstate skilled workers to facilitate a reduction in the immediate skills shortage.
- ★ Export ACT education to regional, national and international markets to promote the ACT as a leader in the provision of quality education.
- ★ Create an enterprise economy by facilitating education institutions to become drivers, or at least strong partners, in the development of new directions in the local emerging enterprising economy. Help ACT tertiary institutions and training facilities to recognise their role in supporting an emerging economy and enhance their partnerships with the local community to achieve significantly increased economic output.
- ★ Contribute to the economic and business development and sustainability of the ACT and region to ensure the future of the ACT region is prosperous and secure. A core element of this aim is the promotion of education and training by developing links between business, industry, commerce, education and professional organisations to facilitate the skilling of workers to meet business demand¹.

¹ Canberra Business Council



- ★ Capitalise on the skills already developed in ACT tertiary institutions and training facilities, plus their connections with local businesses and R&D organisations, to significantly increase their outputs and economic contribution to the region.

Prospective Actions

- ★ Identify areas of training and educational need in collaboration with business, industry and government.
- ★ Support students/trainees/apprentices with appropriate financial recompense to achieve minimum living standards.
- ★ Increase the percentage share of the ACT educational institutions in the education market, and further promote the ACT as a leader of educational attainment in Australia.
- ★ Explore and develop a high level project to identify how educational institutions can adopt to meet the needs of emerging enterprises within the ACT economy e.g. environmentally sustainable practices.

Potential Initiatives

★ Addressing the skills shortage

There is a need for a planning group/steering committee that establishes targets and programs for universities and training centres to liaise with businesses to ensure they get more relevant outcomes from their education and training programs, and to leverage off the expertise of the universities - particularly from a research perspective, and realise the benefits out into the business community. This requires all sectors co-operating to enhance the rate of success of commercialisation of innovation programs, as well as relevant groups contributing to an environment conducive to attracting and retaining the best minds in their fields, and their families, into the ACT.

Outcome: to leverage off the already valuable level of high calibre institutions and resources available in the ACT to enhance the role of the R&D and innovation sectors and to considerably increase value to the ACT economy through commercialisation of their outputs.

★ Exporting Capital Education

Actively promoting the ACT as the place to go to receive the highest standard in education and training will help the ACT region to meet the numerous skills shortages in the area. The increase in student numbers must be matched by increases in student support services and resources. Quality teaching, resources and facilities must be provided to meet the expectations of incoming students and must continue to excel to maintain steady market share growth.

Outcome: quality education, training and teaching opportunities with a supportive cultural and social experience that will benefit Canberra's long-term skills needs.

★ Local University Contribution to an Enterprising Economy in the ACT and Region

The challenge for local universities and other tertiary education institutions is to adapt themselves and their output to service an emerging enterprising economy or economies in the ACT and region. RDA ACT could support a high-level project that would involve exploration of how local universities and other tertiary education institutions can adapt themselves and their output to service an emerging enterprising economy or economies in the ACT and region.

Outcome: education institutions being drivers, or at least strong partners rather than followers, in the development of new directions in the local emerging enterprising economy.



3.3 Environment/Energy/Sustainability/ Climate Change

Context

A regional perspective – An RDA ACT Environment Sub-Committee was formed in November 2009 – an outcome of the RDA ACT Strategic Planning meeting's decision to include Environment as one of its three priority areas.

The first initiative of the Environment Sub-Committee was to write to the Mayors and General Managers of the 14 surrounding Local Government Areas that make up the Capital Region (18/11/09), and to request their input into a practical initiative to explore:

"...a regional approach to the environmental challenges facing our region, and the opportunities we may have for addressing those in a unique and cost effective way. We wish to explore opportunities for greater collaboration between local governments in the region with ACT agencies, and involve the substantial research, education and technological capabilities available in our public institutions and among the many innovative businesses addressing environmental management issues in our region."

Value adding to existing plans – The Sub-Committee undertook research into existing environment-related plans and reports published by key stakeholders with a view to identifying a regional environmental issue/need/gap for RDA ACT focus, including the ACT Government's (Department of the Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water) *Draft Sustainable Energy Policy 2010–2020*, released December 2009. The full bibliography is included in the database in the *Regional Plan Appendices*.

*Weathering the Change: The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2007–2025*¹.

This report included strategies to manage the impacts of climate change including:

- rising costs due to higher energy prices causing increased prices of food, fuel and utilities, particularly for the most vulnerable in the community;
- the severity and prolonged nature of the drought causing long-term water restrictions; this issue needs to be addressed with new water security measures; and
- increased climate variability and instances of extreme weather conditions prompting the need for sustainable practices to ensure security of water and energy supplies.

¹ *Weathering the Change: The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2007–2025*, ACT Government, Australian Capital Territory 2007

The ACT Government has set a target of being a carbon neutral city by 2060

Media Release, Simon Corbell, ACT Minister for Energy: ACT leads Australia in clean energy consumption, 21 June 2010.

The ACT Government has set a target of being a carbon neutral city by 2060. In support of reducing carbon emissions to achieve this target, the ACT Government has invested in renewable energy through its Feed-in Tariff scheme to encourage the use of solar panels, and new legislation introduced in 2009 that requires energy companies to offer GreenPower as the first choice product to new customers.

In 2009, the amount of GreenPower purchased in the ACT rose by 33%, while nationally, consumption grew by 23%; the number of customers in the ACT consuming GreenPower grew by 24% (to 15,788 customers) – about 10% of all connections.

In the *ACT Budget 2010-11*, the Government provided almost \$1.3 million over four years in new funding to increase the amount of renewable energy it uses from 30% to 32.5% of total energy use. For more information: www.environment.act.gov.au/greenpower

Media Release, Simon Corbell: Shortlist revealed for Stage 2 of Solar Facility Project, 21 December 2009.

Development of a large-scale solar power facility capable of powering at least 10,00 ACT homes.

The ACT Government has invited 10 short-listed proponents, from both within Australia and internationally, to develop and provide detailed technical and financial proposals for assessment for the development of a large-scale solar power facility capable of powering at least 10,00 ACT homes, indicating \$30 m to assist in the development of the facility. Technology types proposed by the successful stage 2 consortia include solar thermal technologies utilising dishes and parabolic troughs, photovoltaic (PV) panels, Fresnel lens, and towers with heliostats. A small number of companies offered the option of storage and co-generation to enhance the overall output and consistency of supply from the facility.

Media Release, Jon Stanhope: ACT Government helps tackle e-waste disposal, 15 February 2010.

The ACT Government has provided funding assistance to establish an innovative Canberra-based recycling facility that will encourage the responsible disposal of e-waste items such as computers and televisions. A \$25,000 grant – through the InnovationConnect (Icon) grant program has been made to a private recycling company – Renewable Processes, to assist in establishing a complete on-site recycling service of electronic waste products at the Parkwood Recycling Estate in Macgregor. The CIT Centre for Science and Forensic Engineering has also assisted in the development of material and mineral separation technologies, allowing for the recycling process to include the retrieval of precious metals contained within electronic equipment to be extracted and recycled for new applications.



This facility could also be a viable option for the responsible management of e-waste for rural areas and towns across southern and mid-NSW. There is a charge to take equipment for recycling, but it is an effective and safe method of managing electronic equipment disposal that would otherwise end up in landfill, as vast amounts of electronic products are outdated and disposed of each year.

Environment stakeholders: the Sub-Committee identified key ACT Government stakeholders within the environment area that included the Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, the Chief Minister's Department, the ACT Planning and Land Authority and the Office of the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, with a view to convening a meeting to seek contributions to the *Regional Plan* and canvass views on how RDA ACT could best value-add in the environmental arena. Such a meeting would also include representation from the Commonwealth Government Departments of the Environment, Water, Heritage the Arts, and Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, and the NSW Government Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water.

Another proposal was to include some of the national professional peak bodies which have been involved in developing sustainability such as the Planning Institute of Australia, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, all of which have national offices in Canberra, may have undertaken work on regional sustainability, and may welcome an invitation to provide input into a *Regional Plan*.

Guest presentation: Dr Maxine Cooper, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, gave a presentation to the RDA ACT Committee and invited guests on 19 April 2010, titled: *Regional Sustainability: Opportunities and Barriers*, followed by an opportunity for a broad range of invited guests to meet with RDA ACT Committee Members and others of the regional development community to discuss environmental issues.

Workshop proposal: At a Sub-Committee meeting held in February 2010, Members discussed organising workshops to provide some practical outcomes and solutions to address environmental sustainability for ACT and region for small to medium businesses.

An innovative Canberra-based recycling facility that will encourage the responsible disposal of e-waste items such as computers and televisions.

Objectives

- ★ Develop and promote the ACT as the national leader in sustainable technologies and practices, and Canberra as the 'solar capital'.
- ★ Develop a coordinated approach to encourage and facilitate green building technologies, design practices and operations in the ACT to reduce emissions, and endorse the ACT as a national leader in sustainable technologies and practices.
- ★ Explore a regional approach to environmental challenges to achieve regional synergies.

Prospective Actions

- ★ Assist small and medium sized businesses to incorporate environmentally sustainable practices that will increase their business profits.
- ★ Showcase successful implementation of sustainable waste management practices.
- ★ Develop a coordinated approach to encourage and facilitate green building technologies, design practices and operations in the ACT.
- ★ Coordinate ACT and regional Local Government Areas to collaboratively address adoption of environmentally sustainable practices.
- ★ Showcase the ACT and region's green energy facilities to promote education/engagement with alternative energy technologies, and encourage tourism.

Potential Initiatives

- ★ Support a case study to develop a Regional Sustainability Hub.

Support a case study to develop a Regional Sustainability Hub - an environmental park that showcases successful implementation of environmentally sustainable practices.



- ★ Sponsor and organise a *Business in Focus Month* (BIFM) forum for local businesses promoting take-up of environmentally sustainable business practices that include renewable energy technologies and promote innovative and cost effective approaches to waste management and recycling.

RDA ACT is sponsoring an event as part of the ACT Government's annual *Business in Focus Month* (BIFM) program, designed to support innovation and growth in small to medium sized business in the ACT and region.

Topic: Going Green, what's in it for you?

RDA ACT has invited speakers to provide case studies on how their businesses have adopted environmentally sustainable practices to boost business profits.

- ★ Facilitate development of an *ACT Region Business Sustainability Learning Network*.

Develop the BIFM event concept to become a pilot for an on-going project to encourage small to medium-sized businesses throughout the ACT and region to adopt sustainable green practices to benefit both their business outcomes, and the environment.

Regional Sustainability Hub

In April 2010, the South East Resource Recovery Regional Organisation of Councils (SERRROC) hosted a forum to discuss the potential development of a Regional Sustainability Hub (Queanbeyan) – to be a showcase of sustainable practice sites that include energy use, waste management, water management, food production and building practices.

The forum was well attended by a broad range of potential stakeholders for a local facility, and resulted in a working group of interested stakeholders being established to develop a more detailed Hub concept.

The development and operations of the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies¹ (CERES) provides a potential model for a local Regional Sustainability Hub, with the possibility of support from the Gould League – an independent organisation that promotes environmental education and designs innovative environmental education and training in sustainability².

Queanbeyan City Mayor Tim Overall views a Regional Sustainability Hub as having the potential to fit into the Queanbeyan City Council's Strategic Plan, as a demonstration centre contributing to the understand of young people and offering practical hands-on activities in food production, composting, plant growing, river care; also as a catalyst for extending knowledge and providing opportunities that would encourage young, innovative professionals to Queanbeyan. He considers such a Hub should engage in collaborative partnerships with the private sector and research institutions.

Stakeholders discussed issues such as which region should be encompassed by such a Regional Hub – would it include the ACT? Another focus was the need for good governance, and how to centre the beginnings of such a large-scale and diverse regional project.

Subsequently, the Old Canberra Brickworks has been suggested as a potential site for an ACT Sustainability Hub.

Green Energy Trail

- ★ Investigate the feasibility of developing a Green Energy Trail that showcases green energy initiatives.

For further information see Section 3.8: Tourism/Arts, Culture and Heritage – Green Energy Trail – an initiative that would promote engagement with and education on renewable energy and waste management/recycling, and regional 'green' tourism.

Extend the concept of the ACT as the green energy capital of Australia, and boost green energy awareness by exploring the development of a green energy tourism trail around the ACT and region that incorporates green energy initiatives that could include: wind farms – Lake George, Cullerin Range; landfill methane (biomass) – Mugga Lane; solar – ANU; hydro (ActewAGL), Mount Stromlo; solar – (photovoltaic) Queanbeyan. A comprehensive listing of NSW sites was provided as part of the Regional Leaders' Forum presentation, August 2010.

¹ CERES is a community environment park that was developed 28 years ago by the community of Brunswick (Melbourne) with the help of local government funding. It is now an internationally recognised model of an environmentally sustainable society. Located on 10 acres, it operates on renewable energy, conserves and recycles its water and waste, grows organic food and teaches diverse audiences about more environmentally friendly ways of living. Its sustainability initiatives are visited by nearly half a million people each year – it is a pioneer of community arts, experiential education, and sustainable urban agriculture and for demonstrating innovative and achievable solutions to environmental and social issues. CERES activities include festivals, market days, and many schools (70,000 students/year) attend their hands-on/experiential education programs.

² For more information visit <http://www.gould.edu.au/>



3.4 Health/Population Growth and Ageing

Context

RDA ACT notes the prominence of Health as a major issue identified by the ACT Chief Minister, and by the Prime Minister and voters during the pre-election period. In this *Regional Plan* the Health and Population Focus Area is currently 'under development', due mainly to the major changes currently occurring in this area, the complexity of the issues involved, and the breadth of stakeholder consultation that still needs to be undertaken.

Challenges in the Australian health system include:

- fragmentation of care;
- gaps and poor co-ordination of services;
- pressure on public hospitals and health professionals;
- an unsustainable funding model;
- addressing waste and inefficiency; and
- low levels of local clinical engagement.

Immediate areas of concern in the ACT and region health system include:

- mental health – the need for adequate preventative and support services and recognition of the need for early intervention;
- shortfalls in the supply of hospital, medical and dentistry services in regional areas;
- growing pressures on ACT health care facilities from regional consumers;
- shortfalls in certain types of cancer treatment facilities in the ACT;
- the need for increased awareness and support for women diagnosed with breast cancer;
- increasing levels of obesity;
- increasing incidence of diabetes; and
- the need for increased access to dental care, particularly for the elderly, disadvantaged and under-resourced consumers.

A shortage of radiologists in the ACT highlights the shortcomings of the local health system in relation to services provided to women undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Many patients are required to travel to other capital cities to receive treatment, requiring additional expense for travel and accommodation and undergoing the disadvantage of needing to be away from family and local support

RDA ACT notes the prominence of Health as a major issue identified by the ACT Chief Minister, and by the Prime Minister and voters during the pre-election period.

for extended periods. This is an issue regularly faced by breast cancer patients in rural and regional areas having to undergo treatment in the ACT or at major regional centre facilities. There is an acute shortage of breast cancer care nurses in regional areas and so newly diagnosed patients, those undergoing treatment, and those in the recovery phase do not have ready access to the support services necessary to aid the progress of recovery. Patients rely heavily on family and friends' networks for support during treatment and recovery and this support is too often foregone when patients need to travel to receive treatment.

Bosom Buddies Inc provides support and counselling to women undergoing and recovering from breast cancer treatment. They note that their role in extending their support services throughout the ACT and to rural and regional residents could be significantly enhanced through the provision of public funding. At present a significant proportion of financial support for breast cancer issues is channelled into research rather than support programs to assist patients to be able to return more quickly to lifestyle and work roles.

Population Growth

It is projected that the ACT population will reach 350,000 persons by 2010, 400,000 persons by 2022, and 500,000 persons by 2050¹. The ACT's annual population growth is projected to range between approximately 3,200 persons per annum and 4,200 persons per annum, with approximately three-quarters of this growth driven by natural increase and the remainder by net migration. Such projections assist government planning for health centres, aged care facilities, housing, schools and public utilities.

Increased population growth in the ACT over recent years has placed more pressure on housing supply, health services and other infrastructure. The ACT's population growth is expected to vary by age group; between 2007 and 2056 it is projected that:

- the number of ACT children, aged 14 years of age and under, will increase by approximately 43%;
- the younger working age population, aged 18 to 34 years, will increase by approximately 33%;
- the working age population, aged 35 to 64 years, will increase by approximately 43%; and
- the population of persons aged 65 years and over will increase by 214%².

¹ Chief Minister's Department 2009, *Population Projections 2007-2056*, Canberra.

² Chief Minister's Department 2009, *Population Projections 2007-2056*, Canberra.



Sustainable Population Australia outlined – in a submission to RDA ACT, that an increase in Canberra's population will compound difficulties in the delivery of services in areas such as health, public transport, housing, water, and waste¹. The opposing discussion – for an increase in population for the ACT (that is expected), is that it stimulates economic development. The challenge for the ACT seems to be therefore, how to grow the ACT population in a smart way that does not impact negatively on day-to-day lives, yet brings the benefits of economic development.

Health Service demand

Demand for health services continues to increase each year, and with current population projections illustrating continued growth, the ACT needs a comprehensive response. On the basis of this, the ACT Government commenced a Capital Asset Development Plan, *Your health – our priority*, underpinned by the extensive health services planning. *Your health – our priority* explores a \$1 billion plus redevelopment of ACT health infrastructure with the aim of revitalising the ACT health system so it is ready to respond to growing health service demand through to 2022 and beyond. *Your health – our priority* is designed to ensure the Government can achieve outcomes in the priority action areas of:

- timely access to care;
- aged care;
- mental health;
- chronic disease management;
- early childhood and vulnerable families; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

These priorities require health facilities and infrastructure capable of supporting the delivery of services and programs into the future².

An expected increasing reliance on e-health services by governments will involve issues such as awareness, ease-of-access, privacy, broadband facilities and education/training. Emphasis will need to be placed on the ramifications of e-health provision as more aged users will be accessing an increasing range of care and monitoring services in an at-home environment – individually or with the assistance of carers.

1 Sustainable Populations Australia 2010, *Input to ACT Regional Strategic Plan*, SPA, Canberra.

2 ACT Health, *Your Health – Our Priority: Stage One – Major Priorities*, viewed 4 August 2010, <http://health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=da&tid=10209304&pid=1210029945>

An increasing skew towards an ageing population in the ACT and region places emphasis on the need for improved access to health services and infrastructure.

Aged care

Planning for and provision of increased aged care facilities remains a key issue. An increasing skew towards an ageing population in the ACT and region places emphasis on the need for improved access to health services and infrastructure. An ageing population brings its own set of challenges that include issues such as mobility, carers, and the ability to grow old independently. These challenges also have major implications for the provision of services from the public and private sectors.

The ACT is expected to experience significant population ageing; with those aged 85 years and over to increase by 509%, reaching 22,500 in 2056, and the percentage of the ACT's population aged 65 years and over projected to rise from approximately 10% in 2007 to 20% in 2056¹. This population ageing is primarily the result of baby boomers (those born between 1946–1965) gradually shifting into these older age groups, compounded by falling mortality rates.

The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Service's *ACT strategic plan for positive ageing 2010–2014* outlines a number of key areas to encourage active ageing including: health and well being, housing and accommodation, support services, and work and retirement. An age-friendly city encourages active ageing and ensures that organisations are accessible to older people and provide services to meet their needs.

Positive ageing is about people having opportunities to increase their quality of life as they age through developing social relationships, a healthy lifestyle and feeling welcomed in the community. It is about individuals, the community, businesses and governments valuing the experience of older people and providing them with opportunities to continue to contribute. It is also about seniors remaining involved, caring for themselves and each other and embracing this stage of their lives².

The key role of The Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing (MACA) is to assist the ACT Government to ensure that the needs of older Canberrans are met. The terms of reference for MACA include provision of high quality, objective and responsive advice to assist the ACT Government in:

- developing and implementing policies to advance the status and interests of older people in the ACT community;
- meeting the Government's commitment to foster positive ageing and a sense of well being; and
- ensuring that older Canberrans feel safe and valued, and that they have access to appropriate programs and services.

¹ Chief Minister's Department 2009, *Population Projections 2007–2056*, CMD, Canberra.

² Department of Disability, Housing and Community Service 2010, *ACT strategic plan for positive ageing 2010–2014*, DHCS, Canberra.



MACA considers that the ACT's strategic directions need to be refined to explicitly encompass the current and future needs of older people, and identified housing as a key issue, with their objective being to promote the provision of appropriate and affordable housing that is close to community, shopping and transport facilities.

Carers

In a 2008 policy report – *The Australian Capital Territory in 2020: A Glimpse of the Future for Carers*, Carers ACT notes that all carers should be entitled to the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians in order to enjoy optimum health, social and economic well being and to participate in family, social and community life, employment and education¹. However they found that this aspiration falls short of the reality for many carers, who have the lowest well being scores for any group in Australia – being far more likely to suffer chronic health conditions and depression² and have a higher than average risk of poverty³.

Lack of support and care for carers affects not only the carer, but has flow on effects for the whole community. If there is no respite care then carers are more likely to become unwell⁴, and if there is no support then a portion of the valuable workforce is unable to participate⁵. Carers have an essential role in maintaining the health and social welfare system, which is reliant upon a foundation of unpaid care in the community. Carers note that their economic benefit to the ACT Government is currently a saving conservatively estimated to be \$524.6 million per annum in replacement value of formal care services⁶.

Carers ACT recommend that the following priority areas be given urgent attention:

- workforce participation;
- care facilities (day programs and overnight respite);
- supported accommodation;
- community integration of services as opposed to the current oppositional system of competitive tendering; and
- sector funding to meet anticipated need.

1 Carers ACT 2008, *The Australian Capital Territory in 2020: A Glimpse of the Future for Carers*, Carers ACT, Canberra

2 Cummins, R., Hughes, J., Tomy, A., Gibson, A., Woerner, J., Lai, L. 2007, *The wellbeing of Australians – Carer health and wellbeing*, Australian Centre on Quality of Life, Deakin University, Melbourne.

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003, *Disability, ageing and carers, Australia: Summary of findings*, ABS Catalogue No. 4430.0, ABS, Canberra.

4 Cummins, R., Hughes, J., Tomy, A., Gibson, A., Woerner, J., Lai, L. 2007, *The wellbeing of Australians – Carer health and wellbeing*, Australian Centre on Quality of Life, Deakin University, Melbourne.

5 Carers ACT 2008, *The Australian Capital Territory in 2020: A Glimpse of the Future for Carers*, Carers ACT, Canberra.

6 Carers ACT, using model developed by Access Economics (2005) applied to SDAC data

Strategies are required that support and adequately compensate carers who undertake full-time caring, while also providing support that will allow skilled carers to stay in the workforce by providing options for respite care.

With the population ageing at unprecedented levels and insufficient replacement numbers born in younger cohorts, the number of people available to provide care is already low and will greatly be reduced in coming decades. There is also a major shortage of workers in the community services sector, reflecting the lower wages offered under insufficient funding capacity and the fact that skilled workers are lured into the public service where there are higher salaries and benefits.

Indigenous health

Equitable delivery of services for all sectors of the community is a challenge for the ACT Government. Indigenous Australians experience the worst health of any one identifiable cultural group in Australia, as evidenced in research that indicates:

- two fold rate of low birth weight in Indigenous babies;
- three fold mortality rates among Indigenous 12 – 24 year olds;
- 12% of the total burden of disease and injury from smoking;
- 7% of all deaths and 6% of the total burden of disease from alcohol;
- lower rates of access to acute care investigations and procedures;
- lower likelihood of being treated for and surviving cancer; and
- discharge against advice for 25 – 44 year olds up to 30 times more than other Australians¹.

The COAG *National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes* outlines government responsibilities, and areas that need attention and investment. The ACT Government has agreed to work to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to achieve health outcomes with key goals as agreed by COAG to be met by implementing initiatives under the following five priority areas:

- **Preventive health:** to reduce the factors that contribute to chronic disease through effective anti-smoking campaigns and integrated alcohol, drug and mental health services.
- **Primary health care:** to significantly expand access to and coordination of comprehensive, culturally secure primary health care, allied health services and related services.

¹ Council of Australian Governments 2009, *National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes*, p4, COAG, Canberra.



- **Hospital and hospital-related care:** to deliver better clinical outcomes through quality, culturally secure hospital and hospital-related services that include rehabilitation, allied health care and transitional care case management.
- **Patient experiences:** to ensure access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to comprehensive and co-ordinated health care, provided by a culturally competent health workforce within a broader health system that is accountable for Indigenous health needs in genuine partnership with the people and communities they target. The service will build reach and influence to re-engage the most vulnerable Indigenous people into mainstream and targeted health services.
- **Sustainability:** to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the health workforce, reform and improve the supply of the health workforce generally including the adoption of complementary workplace reforms, create sustainable program and funding models, measure performance and ensure that services are responsive both to national targets and local community needs¹.

Objectives

- ★ To help people in the ACT maintain their health and well being across their lifespan, allowing them to age positively and actively participate in their community as they get older.
- ★ To create a supportive environment for carers with assistance and training to increase workforce participation.
- ★ To provide ACT seniors with access to appropriate and affordable housing and provide support services that will assist seniors to maintain relatively independent lives in which they continue to actively participate in the community through paid and unpaid work, and through educational and recreational activities.
- ★ Balance population growth in the ACT – smart growth that accommodates an increasing population without impacting negatively on Canberrans' daily lives.
- ★ Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in health outcomes.

¹ Council of Australian Governments 2009, *National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes*, p5, COAG, Canberra.

Prospective Actions

- ★ Increase carer workforce participation by increasing care facilities (day programs and overnight respite).
- ★ Improve the health and well being of seniors through education and promotion of healthy lifestyle choices.
- ★ Provide opportunities that encourage people to remain active throughout their lives and develop strategies to reduce social isolation and improve access to social networks for seniors particularly.
- ★ Facilitate access to flexible employment options, training and learning opportunities to encourage continued participation of seniors in the workforce.
- ★ Help to plan innovative accommodation choices for older Canberrans and ensure that land release, planning requirements, concession programs and public and community housing options support the needs of this group.
- ★ Make Indigenous health everyone's business.

Potential Initiatives

★ Carers

Increase carer workforce participation by increasing affordable, accessible, safe, flexible, good-quality respite options – day programs and overnight respite. Establishing additional respite care services across the ACT would allow carers to participate in the workforce which would not only increase quality of life for carers, but also add much needed numbers to the workforce. These reforms will help carers in the ACT and region to better help their families and contribute to their communities, but carers also need improved financial support – better funding for support agencies so they can provide high quality, flexible services with sufficient, well-paid and trained staff.



★ Ageing

As people age, their health and well being can determine the extent to which they can remain active and connected with their community and it may also have a profound effect on their general sense of happiness and contentment with life. Accommodation needs and circumstances change as people grow older – home owners on fixed incomes may struggle with the costs of maintenance, and those who rent may have difficulty affording increasing rental costs. Other seniors may need to modify their homes or move to more suitable accommodation. As people grow older, additional services may be required to assist them to remain active and to continue to live independently. Many seniors also wish to support other members of the community through volunteering. Caring for each other and welcoming young volunteers to work with older community members promotes inter-generational harmony and reduces the risk of social isolation.

Innovative, sustainable and community-based approaches are required to increase access to support services for seniors, and extend them beyond the traditionally accepted forms to include such things as pet care, home maintenance, shopping assistance, garden care, financial advice and ad hoc tasks. Both the business and community sectors should be encouraged to consider how they might contribute to this priority. Retiring from the workforce can be a difficult time that requires planning, advice and support to ensure it is a positive experience. Retirement can be an opportunity to use skills and knowledge in a volunteer capacity as well as participating in leisure, social and physical activities.

The number of retirees is set to explode over the next decade or so, and this is going to create a large draw on the public budget for such things as the pension and an increase in health care. One strategy is to bring in workers from overseas to pay for these increased costs, but another is to encourage the continued participation of the older workers as productive elements of the workforce. Keeping minds active also has health benefits for the ageing.

★ Housing

Working with the community to identify areas that will accommodate additional growth is an important strategy when encouraging increased population density in identified areas as awareness will help to ease the process of development, and helps to create harmony between existing and new housing tenants. By providing alternative housing types within existing areas, the ageing population is able to stay in their communities.

The number of people per dwelling is decreasing across Australia. Promote the creation of secondary dwellings on suburban blocks to increase the number of people per hectare and increase housing choice in suburban areas; e.g. 'granny flats' to free large family homes for their intended capacity.

★ Indigenous

Improved multi-agency, multi-program and inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination to meet the health care needs of Indigenous families and communities will increase the availability of support. So will improving access to targeted early detection and intervention programs for high need Indigenous families. The coordination of service delivery for families that have a high level of contact with services such as child protection, juvenile justice, corrections, housing and health services will help to strengthen the approach to improving Indigenous health care and access.



3.5 Infrastructure/ Telecommunications/Planning

Context

Infrastructure planning and investment has become a heightened national priority. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has established the COAG *Cities Program* – to examine the need for better integration of infrastructure and land-use planning for Australia's future growth in productivity, prosperity and service delivery.

Building quality infrastructure is making an investment in the capacity of Canberra to meet future growth requirements. Infrastructure is a long-term asset essential for achieving economic prosperity, and for the effective delivery of services – particularly health, education, transport and municipal services.

The *Canberra Plan* is the most influential of the Government's strategic planning tools – it sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the sustainable well-being of the ACT, with quality infrastructure playing a crucial role in achieving these objectives.

Three planning challenges for the ACT include:

- its wide area of development compared to the size of its population – transport and economies of scale;
- the dual ACT/Commonwealth planning system; and
- its place as the centre of the Australian Capital Region which puts additional pressure on Canberra's health, transport and education infrastructure by NSW residents (financial recompense provided to the ACT through the Commonwealth Grants Commission does not cover actual costs).

The Discussion Paper: *An Infrastructure Plan for the ACT*, notes that prior to self-government, the Commonwealth Government built and maintained the ACT's infrastructure, often to the highest standards – a showcase for Australia's national institutions. In 1989, the ACT Government inherited a legacy of variable quality roads, schools, health facilities, public housing and water infrastructure, and needed to maintain this infrastructure on far smaller financial reserves.

ACT Budget 2010-2011 – Infrastructure is an important component of economic growth and essential for meeting the service delivery needs of the community i.e. supporting the economic and social well-being of the community – including education, health, mobility and leisure. In the 2008-09 Budget, the Government commenced a five-year, \$1 billion *Building the Future* infrastructure program, augmented by the Commonwealth's *Nation Building and Jobs Plan* – i.e. *Building Australia Fund* – a \$20 billion investment in critical economic infrastructure

projects of national significance. An additional \$685 million was invested in 2009-10, of which the Commonwealth funded \$306 million. The 2010–11 Budget *Infrastructure Investment Program* supports and enhances these programs with further investments in infrastructure – including \$394 million for new projects.

There will be 17,000 residential dwelling sites released over the next four years to support the growth of the city. The ACT Planning and Land Authority approved \$1 billion worth of development in 2009, encouraged by newly revised predictable and prompt planning and approvals processes. Because local building and construction industry capacity is limited and a significant proportion of it can be absorbed by just a few large projects and conversely, recognising the capacity of the industry to stimulate the wider economy – the timing of projects needs to be considered as part of infrastructure planning both to achieve an outcome and to ensure sufficient work is available to keep the local industry employed. There is a need to focus on developing local skills and attracting new skilled workers to the ACT; also ensuring that local businesses have fair and reasonable opportunity to compete for infrastructure projects.

The *ACT Government Infrastructure Plan 2010* was released in June 2010 – the first in a rolling program of annual plans, informed by community and industry consultation. This Plan notes that Canberra's development into a mature capital city with its own sense of identity has been rapid but comprehensive, supported by a fast growing economy and major government investment in infrastructure, along with the infrastructure investments of the private sector and Commonwealth.

The Report also noted the need for careful consideration of future requirements and for planning a coordinated, focused and effective program of infrastructure investment, i.e. long-term strategic planning for future infrastructure, taking into account climate change, technological advances, the ageing population, advances in health care and labour supply constraints to ensure the continued prosperity of the community and the sustainability of services.

The ACT's highest priority bid for Infrastructure Australia funding was the Majura Parkway project as it will play an important role in any future development of a freight hub at the Canberra Airport, as well as delivering significant benefits to local road users and road freight on the Monaro and Federal Highways. Other shared funding opportunities for major infrastructure initiatives are:



- a light rail system linking Civic to the airport, Parliamentary Triangle and major town centres (perhaps to include Queanbeyan);
- High Speed Rail, linking the eastern capital cities, including Canberra;
- a new sports stadium; and
- a world-class convention centre.

National Broadband Network

A major Commonwealth infrastructure development is to deliver the National Broadband Network (NBN) – a 'fibre to the premises' network delivering fast-speed internet to 90% of homes, schools and businesses. The network is being built and operated by NBN Co Limited, a new company owned jointly by the Commonwealth and private sector that will invest up to \$43 billion over eight years to build the NBN. Five 'first release' sites have been identified for live trials of the network design and construction methods.

The ACT has the highest level of home internet users in Australia at 82%. This NBN initiative will also support the development of the ACT and region as a centre for excellence in information communication telecommunications¹.

The ACT and region should seek identification as a priority area for the roll-out of the National Broadband Network (NBN). Canberra's population includes a sizeable aggregation of users of high-speed data services, and already 74% of the population is connected to broadband.

High-speed broadband can provide remedies to a number of issues facing smaller regional communities located in close proximity to larger regional centres such as Canberra. Also, supplying applications on a local basis such as education, health, entertainment and business can boost usage of local services while reducing pressure on Canberra's roads, services, infrastructure and amenities.

Objectives

- ★ Support infrastructure that underpins the ACT Government's commitment to achieving zero net greenhouse emissions for the ACT by 2060.
- ★ Facilitate a strong dynamic ACT economy by supporting infrastructure projects that reflect the high standards of the nation's capital.

¹ ICT Infrastructure for the ACT and Capital Region Discussion Paper, August 2009.

Prospective Actions

- ★ Identify choices that can be made when building new infrastructure that reflect the choice to minimise greenhouse gas emissions.
- ★ Provide support to progress infrastructure planning projects that promote the ACT as a national business hub.
- ★ Facilitate and support provision of key infrastructure necessary to support economic development in the ACT and region and for the effective delivery of services – health, education, and transport.

Potential Initiatives

- ★ Improving the rail links in and around the ACT region will not only help to boost investment in the region, but will open a broader labour market.

Light Rail System – a light rail system (or trams) linking Civic to the airport, Parliamentary Triangle, major town centres and Queanbeyan will help to move the working population around the ACT region. The light rail system will also help to further reduce dependency on private vehicles and help move visitors around the city. Connecting the light rail system with the major bus system nodes in the town centres will help to integrate the two services together.

Outcome: high frequency, efficient transport to improve the connectivity of the region.

High Speed Rail – a high speed rail network linking the east coast capitals will help to open up the ACT region to further investment and the labour market.

Outcome: reduce the skills shortage and increase investment in the ACT region.



- ★ Support the roll out of new infrastructure in the ACT and region

The roll out of the NBN will positively affect the high number of internet users in the ACT.

Outcome: High speed internet.

Construction of a 'new Australia Forum' would provide a venue for national and international meetings, significant events, and encouraging business and tourism into the ACT.

- ★ Support construction of the Majura Parkway

The implementation of the Majura Parkway is a vital piece of infrastructure in movement of traffic around the ACT region.

The Majura Parkway will also help to link the north and south of Canberra and help the flow of traffic around the airport precinct.

With the expected growth of the airport precinct, the new terminal and the additional commercial space to be developed, there will be a significant increase in the number of trips generated in that area.

A Majura Parkway would help to move that traffic efficiently around the precinct and get people moving on their journeys.

Outcome: there would be a better flow of freight and interstate transport around the city centre, while also improving the amenity of the city centre streets. The Parkway will also improve traffic flow in the airport precinct.



3.6 Regional Development/ Communities/Local Government

An RDA ACT priority is to develop a sense of seamless border between the ACT and its surrounding region.

Context

An RDA ACT priority is to develop a sense of seamless border between the ACT and its surrounding region. This objective highlights the need for significant cross-border communication and consultation on selected priority areas, including transport infrastructure.

RDA ACT is a regional organisation, and takes a regional perspective. Canberra is the largest urban settlement in the local region which includes the ACT and surrounding Local Government Areas (LGAs) of: Bega Valley, Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma Monaro, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Harden, Palerang, Queanbeyan City, Snowy River, Tumut Shire, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley and Young. RDA ACT works closely with its neighbouring Regional Development Australia organisations, particularly RDA Southern Inland (SI), and Far South Coast (FSC) and Illawarra, to holistically progress projects of common interest to the region.

RDA ACT is establishing links and cooperative alliances with all levels of government, and with local business, industry, education and community organisations to promote regional development. RDA ACT is also working towards inclusion in regional forums, thereby encouraging a holistic view of the region that includes the ACT perspective in NSW state deliberations; for example, the Regional Managers' Network (NSW Illawarra and South East Economic Development and Environment Cluster), and the South Eastern Region Organisation of Councils (SEROCC).

The ACT is an intrinsic part of the local Capital Region, the hub of its employment, and regional provider of a variety of private and public services including health, education and training, and of recreational, cultural and air travel facilities. The *ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework Agreement* commits both the ACT and NSW to negotiate solutions to cross-border issues.

There are numerous cross-border issues that benefit from a regional development approach and there are synergies to be achieved through co-operative planning particularly in the co-ordination and provision of services and infrastructure. These synergies draw on the relative strengths of the ACT and surrounding region. While the ACT economy is centred on government and higher order services, education and research, the surrounding regions support rural industries and offer both lifestyle and tourism destinations.



Local Government

The Commonwealth Government is working to strengthen ties with local governments through the Australian Council of Local Government and the Australian Local Government Association. The *Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program*, announced by the Prime Minister at the Australian Council of Local Government inaugural meeting on 18 November 2008 as part of the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan, has provided more than \$1 billion to local government authorities to build and modernise community infrastructure.

The Commonwealth Government is also funding a \$250,000 education campaign to promote a referendum to include local government in the Australian constitution (announcement made by Minister for Local Government Anthony Albanese, opening the National General Assembly of Local Government, 15 June 2010). Local Government has been campaigning for an amendment to the Constitution that will rectify uncertainty over whether the Commonwealth Government can fund councils directly. This uncertainty was highlighted in 2009 when the High Court's Pape decision indicated that the Commonwealth Government lacks constitutional power to fund local government.

In the ACT there are community groups in each of the major town centres that represent and support the people who live in their communities. These community groups are an important part of the social fabric of local communities, often providing venues and activities that encourage social contact, for example, for older citizens to socialise and young families to meet. They may also advocate on behalf of their community.

Objectives

- ★ Develop a sense of a seamless border between the ACT and its surrounding region.
- ★ Progress RDA involvement in cross border communications and consultations on selected priority areas, e.g. transport infrastructure.
- ★ Encourage an inclusive, holistic approach to regional development.

Prospective Actions

- ★ Work closely with neighbouring Regional Development Australia organisations, particularly RDA Southern Inland (SI), and Far South Coast (FSC) and Illawarra, to progress projects of common interest to the region. Establish links and partnerships with regional stakeholders including other RDAs, all levels of government, and with business, industry, education and community groups.
- ★ Identify cross border issues that would benefit from the synergies of a cross-border approach
- ★ Address regional transport issues, particularly those linking ACT and Queanbeyan, and facilitate progression of interests in this priority area.
- ★ Continue to encourage RDA ACT's inclusion in other regional groups and forums to holistically address regional issues. Have RDA ACT included in regional forums, thereby allowing and encouraging a holistic view of the region that includes the ACT perspective in NSW state deliberations; for example, the Regional Managers' Network (NSW Illawarra and South East Economic Development and Environment Cluster, and the South Eastern Region Organisation of Councils (SEROC).
- ★ Assist in developing a collective voice for the ACT's communities. Facilitate creation of a Canberra Community Groups Council that will provide a representative voice to promote collective community messages to the ACT government.
- ★ Strengthen the ACT's suburban centres by encouraging engagement between local businesses and the local community. Provide support to communities wanting to reinvigorate their local shopping centres through a suburban centre improvement project (SCIP).



Potential Initiatives

★ Stakeholders

Continue to develop a comprehensive regional stakeholder database. RDA ACT has been compiling a database of regional stakeholders, divided into the nine focus areas, and seeks to ensure all stakeholders have been included and are appropriately represented – refer to the Stakeholder Database which forms an attachment to this Plan, or view at www.rdaact.org.au

Request stakeholders' input into the *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010*, and incorporate new information to form an overarching, holistic and visionary *Regional Plan 2011*.

Work closely with appropriate stakeholders to identify and progress projects of mutual interest and issues of concern, to identify gaps and reduce duplication of work.

★ Develop a regional perspective

Establish links and cooperative alliances with all levels of government and other regional stakeholders to promote regional development and address issues of mutual interest. Convene a network of stakeholders to document existing and future needs, cross regional interdependencies and barriers to action, and develop innovative and sustainable cross-portfolio solutions to meet the challenges of the ACT and region.

Form a working group between the ACT Government and Queanbeyan City Council to progress issues relevant to both and limit duplication of work on common projects. Lobby for RDA ACT's inclusion in the communications and consultations of the newly formed Eastern Regional Transport Taskforce.

Strengthen RDA ACT's role in the Regional Leaders Forum to help to develop the scope and facilitate the work of this important regional forum.

Participate in regional meetings including the Regional Managers' Network (NSW Illawarra and South East Economic Development and Environment Cluster), and the South Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (SEROC).

★ Canberra Community Groups Council (CCGC)

Form an ACT Community Councils Group including representation of all of the community councils and community groups, that could assist to make strong and collective representation to governments and share synergies of information and resources.

The formation of a CCGC would bring together the ACT's Community Councils and numerous community groups and provide them with a collective voice. Groups could work together collaboratively and benefit from the synergies of shared information, resources and experiences. Most importantly, the CCGC could make representation to the ACT government to lobby for services that communities collectively identify to be lacking or in need of remediation.

★ Suburban Centre Improvement Project (SCIP)

This is an initiative that would revitalise existing and derelict suburban centres. The upgrading of facilities and access would encourage community patronage of local businesses and enhance community spirit. Providing quality community shopping and spaces to gather would also reduce the likelihood of vandalism and destruction.

A successful initiative that has revitalised a number of suburban centres across Brisbane, the SCIP was a joint initiative between the council and local businesses to improve the amenity of the local shopping street, in character with the suburb and its history. The improvements are made by upgrading existing features or providing new ones, such as new community gathering spaces; upgrading access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities; improving safety in the centre; and reinforcing the centre's identity using design, paving, landscaping, street furniture and artworks.¹

Outcomes from the SCIP included improved centre amenity and comfort through upgraded and/or wider footpaths, community gathering places and increased shade trees and seating. Centres often experienced an increase in economic viability as the setting of existing businesses was made more attractive and inviting. The theme of improvements to the centres was often based on local history and culture and was used to inspire public art, entry signage and notice boards to establish a point of difference in the community.²

¹ Brisbane City Council, *Suburban Centre Improvement Project*, viewed 29 July 2010, http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/BCC:BASE::pc=PC_2058

² Brisbane City Council, *Qualities of a SCIP*, viewed 29 July 2010, http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/BCC:BASE::pc=PC_2060



3.7 Social Inclusion/Housing Not for Profits

Context

Housing availability and affordability

The ACT has a proud tradition of public housing and the highest proportion of people residing in public housing of any jurisdiction, with 9.2% of households living in public housing compared with 4.9% nationally¹. In 2007-08, approximately 17.3% of the ACT population was renting from a private landlord (compared with 23.9% of the population nationally)².

However, the proportion of Canberrans receiving the maximum amount of Commonwealth Rental Assistance was the highest in Australia, with the proportion growing from 76.5% in June 2007, to 79% in June 2009, well above the national average of 71.7% in June 2009³.

In the year to February 2010, average standard residential property prices in the ACT rose 4.2% to \$563,634⁴. The ACT ranks highly in terms of housing affordability, with Canberra being the fifth most affordable housing market in the nation (following Ballarat, Rockingham, Toowoomba, and Bunbury)⁵. However, it should be noted that the high level of housing affordability in the ACT is closely linked to the ACT's comparatively high income levels⁶. Given the importance that access to affordable housing has on community life and maintaining a strong economy, the challenges of balancing growth, affordability, access and environmental impacts are significant.

Currently the ACT Government does not equally recognise the significance of housing affordability for all sectors of the community, particularly students. The challenge that comes with increased numbers attending ACT education institutions is the capacity to house more students in the ACT, close to the universities. In early 2010 ANU had a widely publicised shortage of student accommodation places with their first year accommodation guarantee, and this is not a unique situation⁷. Across the ACT the

1 Chief Minister's Department 2007, *The Canberra Social Plan: Progress Report 2007*, CMD, Canberra.

2 *Australian Social Trends, Data Cube - Housing*, ABS, 10 December 2009 (cat. no. 4102.0)

3 *Deposit Power, Housing Affordability Report*, Real Estate Institute of Australia, December quarter 2009

4 ACT Treasury, *ACT Residential Property Market Report - February 2010*, ACT Treasury, 22 March 2010, <http://www.treasury.act.gov.au/snapshot/RESPROP.pdf>

5 *6th Annual Demographic International Housing Affordability Survey: 2010, Ratings for Metropolitan Markets, Demographia (COX, Wendell, and PAVLETICH, Hugh)*, 2010 <http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf>

6 Chief Minister's Department 2010, *A Social Overview of the ACT*, ACT Government, Canberra.

7 Gilmore, H 2010, 'No room and the inn... or the university', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 February, viewed 4 August 2010, <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/no-room-at-the-inn--or-the-university-20100214-nzkk.html>

cost of private rentals and the willingness of landlords to allow groups to tenant their properties is hurdle to housing students. In recent times the development of the ANU Exchange precinct on the western edge of Civic has gone some way to alleviating the accommodation shortage but there is still more that can be done, including increasing affordable accommodation.

Supported accommodation in Canberra is designed to provide a range of support and accommodation services to people at risk of homelessness or in crisis. This can include young people, single men, single women, families including sole parents with accompanying children, and women and/or children escaping domestic violence¹. The problem with the current set up of supported accommodation is that there are often criteria that need to be met and a lengthy waiting list. The service does not embrace those wanting an alternative form of affordable accommodation. The support of communal housing and similar share houses as a legitimate form of housing can help to address the affordable housing shortage that exists in Canberra. What needs to be put in place are regulations and guidelines for running communal housing so that they don't end up with too many residents for the facilities, overcrowding, or hazards.

Indigenous Canberrans

The Council of Australian Government's *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation* points out the gap in the Indigenous employment rate at the 2006 Census was around 24 percentage points. To reduce this gap to 12 percentage points, Indigenous employment growth of around 100,000 over ten years would be needed. This represents a 63% total increase on the number of Indigenous people employed in mid 2006². To achieve the significant improvement in opportunities for Indigenous people, the private and public sector would need to engage in job creation through:

- creating real sustainable employment in areas of government service delivery;
- strengthening current government procurement policies;
- incorporating Indigenous workforce strategies into all new major COAG reforms; and
- reviewing all Public Sector Indigenous employment and career development strategies³.

1 ACT Affordable Housing, 2010, *Steps in Supported Accommodation*, viewed 6 August 2010, http://www.actaffordablehousing.com.au/supported_accommodation.html

2 Council of Australian Government 2009, *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation*, p9, COAG, Canberra.

3 Council of Australian Government 2009, *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation*, p3-4, COAG, Canberra



In 2007–08 representation of Indigenous Australians in the ACT prison system was over twelve times greater (61.1 prisoners per 100,000 adults) than of non Indigenous Australians, up from being seven times greater in 2005–06¹. Additionally, it should be noted that younger persons have a higher rate of imprisonment than older persons. In the ACT, the community corrections rate and proportion of Indigenous offenders serving community correction was higher than the national average at 533.4 and 4,645.6 per 100,000 adults respectively. When looked at in combination with the imprisonment rates, Indigenous Australians are significantly over-represented in the ACT Criminal Justice System.²

In a recent initiative the ACT Government has committed to reducing the over-representation of Indigenous Canberrans in the justice system. This commitment includes the establishment of the ACT Aboriginal Justice Centre, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the drafting of Whole of Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement. One of the most important initiatives is restorative justice for Indigenous youth. The Restorative Justice Unit undertakes activities to increase Indigenous youth participation by supporting them with outreach assessments, home visits, assistance with travel and community based placements that have culturally appropriate support. Only 12% of total referrals to the Restorative Justice Unit are Indigenous, and as such have a lower participation rate than non Indigenous youth. However, once engaged in the process, there is a high level of compliance with their agreements.

RDA ACT has recommended that the ACT Government support a restorative justice initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth to establish an Indigenous friend position who will assist Indigenous youth through the restorative justice process. This is in response to the 1991 report on the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* that found young Indigenous people were at particular risk within the criminal justice system, and diversion should be given a high priority. Also, data from the Restorative Justice Unit shows that proportionally twice as many Indigenous youth, compared with non-Indigenous youth, were assessed as not suitable to be referred for restorative justice. RDA ACT contends that greater levels of support from an Indigenous friend during the assessment process would significantly improve the result.

The ACT Government has registered its interest with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department for the next round of funding under the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002* Grants Scheme.

1 *Report on Government Services Indigenous Compendium*, Table 8A.3, Productivity Commission, 9 April 2009

2 *Report on Government Services Indigenous Compendium*, Table 8A.3, Productivity Commission, 9 April 2009

Canberrans with a Disability

The ACT Government's policy framework to improve outcomes and opportunities for Canberrans with a disability - *Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014*, guides priority areas for disability policy and service delivery in the ACT through to 2014. *Future Directions* has been developed within the context of *The Canberra Plan - Towards our Second Century* and *Building our Community: Canberra Social Plan*, the ACT's *Human Rights Act 2004*, and is consistent with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

Future Directions seeks to benefit all people with disability in the ACT, which is a person with an intellectual, sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury (or some combination of these) that is likely to be permanent. In the ACT:

- 45,200 people (14.2%) report having a disability;
- 24,100 people report they have a disability requiring assistance;
- 13,000 people have a profound or severe activity limitation;
- 12,400 people with a disability are aged 65 or over;
- 4,284 people accessed the accommodation, respite, community access and support services funded and provided by community and government service providers in 2007-2008; and
- government funding of approximately \$65 m was allocated to services and support for people with disability in 2008-2009.¹

Current needs in the community require more affordable housing designed to be accessible for the disabled/aged; ACTION buses with an expanded disability functionality; and greater access of people with disability to employment in the region.

Objectives

- ★ Promote the establishment of affordable communal housing with appropriate regulation and safety measures.
- ★ Close the gap between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians.
- ★ Reduce the number of impediments for people living with a disability to access housing, transport, employment, services, entertainment and amenities.

¹ Disability ACT 2009, *Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014*, DHSC, Canberra.



Prospective Actions

- ★ Create more housing designed to be accessible for the disabled and the aged.
- ★ Increase the number of ACTION buses with universal access.
- ★ Increase the employment of people with disability in the region.
- ★ Support the creation of a guideline for the building and operation of communal accommodation.
- ★ Increase the participation rate in the Restorative Justice Program to reflect the proportion of Indigenous youth in the ACT criminal justice system.

Potential Initiatives

★ Canberra Communal Housing

Support the creation of a one stop place for room listings, regulations, requirements of owners and rights for the tenants that would help to encourage the creation of affordable communal housing to address the shortage of housing for people on a low income or looking for alternative housing options.

Outcome: Support the creation of a one-stop shop for people to find communal accommodation and information about the creation and operation of communal accommodation.

★ Disability: Accessibility

There are three priority areas that need to be addressed: housing, transport and employment. Addressing these priorities provides benefits for both the individual and the wider community. In addition to these three priority areas the ability to access services, entertainment and amenities is also an issue.

Housing: there is an identified need for a measurable increase in the number of affordable and accessible houses available for people with disabilities. A commitment to construction of new housing in the region in accordance with the design principles of universal accessibility will increase the availability of such housing for people living with a disability and would also cater for the increasing number of people with accessibility issues prompted by our ageing population.

Transport: co-operation between the ACT and NSW governments and private transport providers to provide seamless, affordable, accessible and timely transport within the ACT, and between the ACT and surrounding NSW regional centres for all users.

Employment: increase the employment of people with disabilities in the ACT and region.

Outcome: an increase in the universal accessibility of housing, transport and employment with additional promotion to increase the access to services, entertainment and amenities.

★ Restorative Justice Program

Support an increase in participation rates in the Restorative Justice program to reflect the proportion of Indigenous youth in the ACT criminal justice system.

Outcome: an increase in funding reflected in increased participation of Indigenous youth in the Restorative Justice program.



3.8 Tourism/Arts, Culture and Heritage

Context

The ACT is the nation's capital – a vibrant city with a unique culture and history. It is also the site of Australia's principal governmental, judicial, cultural, scientific, educational and military institutions, and home to many icons of national significance. It includes the legations and diplomatic residences of foreign governments, many national institutions and organisations and a plethora of great family attractions, dining and accommodation options.

Renowned as the 'bush capital', the ACT incorporates many beautiful areas of natural bush, and provides a gateway to the delights of the surrounding Capital Region that include gourmet food and cold climate wines, historic towns, natural wonders, beautiful coastlines and the Snowy Mountains.

RDA ACT Tourism Objectives

- ★ Preserve, enhance and optimise the benefits of the ACT and region's cultural, heritage and tourism assets.
- ★ Assist to define and promote ACT and region branding. Encourage regional branding of attractions, produce, and cultural and recreational pursuits.

Prospective Actions

- ★ Promote the significance of the ACT and region as a place of natural beauty, gourmet produce, and the site of national icons – facilitate access to the region's cultural, heritage, and tourism assets.
- ★ Strengthen the marketing of Canberra as the green energy capital of Australia; boost local green energy awareness and focus.
- ★ Promote the ACT as a centre for excellence in sustainability, with particular focus on green energy production, waste management/resource recovery and other sustainable management practices.
- ★ Encourage regional tourism by developing and supporting initiatives that promote the ACT and region as a gourmet food and wine area.

Potential Initiatives

- ★ Support development of walking/cycling regional tourism with a regional network of walking and cycling trails that begin and end in the ACT, joining points of common interest and sites of tourism/arts/heritage significance around the ACT and region.

Walking/cycling regional tourism – support the development of a regional network of walking and cycling trails that join points of interest and provide overnight accommodation for longer journeys.

The development of such trails would open up parts of the ACT that have previously been closed to the general public, or been hard to access. Using smaller towns in the region as rest or interest points would help to boost local economies and keep the trail from having too many intersections with busy roads. Explore the potential to link development of regional walking and cycling trails in with food and wine producers in the ACT and region, and with sites along the Green Energy Trail.

There are other such projects currently being progressed around the ACT; e.g. the Centenary of Canberra's round Canberra Trail – a complete circumference of Canberra (about 270 km long), from Tharwa at the southern extreme, and Forde in Gungahlin at the northern most point.

Regional tourism should engage interest from the surrounding LGAs and the ACT may see value in becoming the start and end point of such routes. A good trail example is The Kidman Trail, along which visitors enjoy "seeing the world in a different way" on "a multi use cycling and walking trail that traverses 225 kilometres of roadsides, quiet farm routes, forest tracks and unmade road reserves."

- ★ Assist in the production of a brochure to encourage trout fishing in the region.

A project to produce a brochure designed to encourage trout fishing in the ACT region is being produced in collaboration with RDA Southern Inland.



- ★ Facilitate development of a Regional Sustainability Hub
- an educational attraction that showcases and promotes engagement with environmentally sustainable practices.

Regional Sustainability Hub

For more information on the Regional Sustainability Hub project concept, refer to the 'Environment' focus area.

Explore the potential to interlink the sites of the Regional Sustainability Hub with those of a Green Energy Trail to make a comprehensive and educational tourism attraction that boosts the 'green' appeal of the region and promotes engagement with the concepts of environmental sustainability - renewable energy, waste management/recycling.

- ★ Investigate the feasibility of developing a Green Energy Trail that showcases the ACT and region's green energy facilities and promotes engagement with renewable energy technologies.

Green Energy Trail

Extend the concept of the ACT as the green energy capital of Australia, and boost green energy awareness by exploring the development of a green energy tourism trail around the ACT and region that incorporates green energy initiatives that could include: wind farms - Lake George, Cullerin Range; landfill methane (biomass) - Mugga Lane; solar - ANU; hydro (ActewAGL), Mount Stromlo; solar - (photovoltaic) Queanbeyan. A comprehensive listing of NSW sites was provided as part of the Regional Leaders' Forum presentation, August 2010.

A project concept to develop a green energy trail - green tourism has been broached with some stakeholders whereby tourists/school groups could visit a range of renewable energy sites around the ACT and region. Potential outcomes include increased tourism, increased understanding of and engagement with sustainable environment initiatives, and a boost to the concept of identifying the ACT as a leader in environmental sustainability.

Follow up is needed to ascertain whether there would be demand for this green tourism - to discuss with Australian Capital Tourism. Also discuss with the National Capital Educational Tourism Project to ascertain whether the schools might add another day on to their year six visit to the nation's capital to 'follow' this trail.

Could also explore potential in terms of technical tours – Green Industrial Tours; although not a traditional tourism market, attendees would still require accommodation, meals, travel etc. It has a good synergy with the ACT and region as the ACT has a lot of the research capacity, whereas the region has much of the product – the NSW Government has identified six renewable energy precincts in NSW and three of them are located in this region.

- ★ Work with local produce businesses to develop a cluster of regional food and wine producers with synergies for product promotion.

Work with local-produce businesses to develop an ACT and region food and wine cluster with synergies for product promotion. The concept would extend to encouraging local retailers to stock strongly branded local region products emphasising their value as produce with low food miles. Refer to the Business focus area for more information.

- ★ Evaluate tourism project proposals, e.g. Poacher's Way.

The Poacher's Way brand (LIVE.LIFE.WELL) brings together 25 Canberra-region small businesses to showcase a range of experiences that can be enjoyed by locals and visitors. Inspired by the region's richness, these local artists, chefs, winemakers and rural hosts each have a fascinating story to tell and a wonderful product to share. The brand is about real people, products and experiences; it represents a way of life and a journey and invites everyone to be part of the experience. Poacher's Way showcases the Canberra region in a different light to the more traditional perception of Canberra as a destination for school excursions and national institutions.

Poacher's Way is seeking funding support to develop a marketing plan with a view to expanding their profile, that would offer regional benefits including increasing tourism, strengthening local economies and generating employment opportunities.

- ★ Support development of the Canberra Airport

Enhancing the attractiveness of Canberra as a location for business and tourism through the development of the Canberra Airport would have significant tourism benefits for the ACT and region.



3.9 Transport

Context

Local

Canberra's unique planning style – with its wide geographic spread and large areas of green belt, exacerbates the ACT's internal transport issues. Walter Burley-Griffin's original design included a tram network, but Canberra's growth was made in an era of widespread private motor vehicle ownership when fuel prices were low and the supply seemingly unlimited and the car became the predominant form of transport. Canberra's urban form was extended with transport corridors from the city out to town centres leading to a city layout designed for the private car.

The result is that Canberra has low population densities, dispersed over a large area, and this makes it difficult and expensive for public transport to service the needs of the population – thus Canberra's current situation with under-developed public transport infrastructure, which is compounded by the capacity of the ACT population to own and operate motor vehicles. However, in the current environment of climate change and rising fuel prices, new transport policies and projects are required to address these challenges, including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The *Canberra Plan* and a multitude of ACT transport plans identify the need to develop a sustainable transport system for Canberra that will facilitate the efficient movement of people internally, regionally - in and out of the ACT, and nationally. The ACT Government has a resolve to develop Canberra to be Australia's exemplar sustainable city, yet the existing transport system is currently not sustainable from an environmental, economic and social perspective – Canberrans have the highest carbon emissions from passenger car transport per capita of any Australian capital city, and have amongst the highest carbon emissions per capita of any city in the world.

New pressures to adapt and improve transport options will occur in response to a mix of demands like the growth of new suburbs, the growing number of people working in and commuting to the city, an increasing freight task, and the growing number of older people and people with disabilities in the ACT who are increasingly reliant on public transport. While the private car may remain the main form of transport for the majority of Canberrans, the ACT Government will continue to implement measures that promote and encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives to reduce carbon emissions and improve the health and well being of the ACT's people and economy.

Canberra's unique planning style – with its wide geographic spread and large areas of green belt, exacerbates the ACT's internal transport issues.

The ACT Government will continue to implement measures that promote and encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives to reduce carbon emissions and improve the health and well being of the ACT's people and economy.

Commuter regions around the ACT are important for helping to supply the Canberra labour market, imperative because skill shortages will remain a challenge for the ACT.

Regional

A report by Access Economics (2008) – *The ACT and its region: economic relationships and key drivers of economic growth*, sets out the ACT's transport linkages in four levels of frequency:

- Daily: the commuter belt – people from nearby areas of NSW that travel in and out of the ACT most weekdays for employment and schooling, and the far smaller number that live in the ACT and do the reverse commute.
- Weekly: the commerce belt – people from NSW (mainly) travelling in and out of the ACT on approximately a weekly basis for such activities as shopping, recreation, sport, eating-out, and attending regular business meetings (e.g. Federal Parliament sittings).
- Periodic: the service and tourism linkages – people from NSW, and further afield, travelling in and out of the ACT to access major health services, tourism, and for infrequent business meetings.
- Permanent migration: people from all around Australia and the world (though still mainly NSW) moving in or out of the ACT on a permanent basis.

Commuter regions around the ACT are important for helping to supply the Canberra labour market, imperative because skill shortages will remain a challenge for the ACT over the coming decade as baby boomers retire. It is therefore prudent to provide good transport links for commuters – to examine and progress measures that make trans-border movements easier for people who are supplying the ACT labour markets. The benefits of making it easier to travel across the border to encourage skilled workers from surrounding commuter areas outweighs the disadvantages this might cause such as an increase in the use of ACT services.

JOURNEY TO WORK INTO THE ACT, 2006						
	North Canberra/ Belconnen	Woden Valley/ Western Creek	South Canberra/ Tuggeranong	Gungahlin/ Hall	ACT – Bal*	Total ACT
ACR	8120	2192	7827	687	405	19231
<i>Queanbeyan (C)</i>	4450	1468	5372	222	200	11712
<i>Palerang (A) – Pt A</i>	1342	306	1144	106	53	2951
<i>Yass Valley (A)</i>	1622	187	694	279	60	2842
<i>Balance of ACR</i>	706	231	617	80	92	1726
Illawarra	114	15	76	4	27	236
Sydney	525	97	308	27	185	1142
Rest of NSW	187	39	111	7	62	406
Rest of Australia	729	115	422	23	226	1515
Total usual residents living outside the ACT and working inside the ACT	9675	2458	8744	748	905	22530

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Customised Data Request. *includes Remainder of ACT, Canberra and ACT Undefined and No Fixed Address



It is a paradox that people outside the ACT wanting to access some services e.g. a hospital, will do so irrespective of the quality of the transport links into the ACT; whereas people wanting to visit the ACT for tourism, entertainment, recreation and shopping are far more sensitive to cost and congestion and will only come if it is convenient to do so. Each cross border trip into the ACT can be seen as an income generating opportunity for the ACT that will offset the cost of service provision to residents of the surrounding Local Government Areas (LGAs).

There is also net gain for the ACT in maximising the income flows that can be generated by servicing the region's population with restaurants, retail, accommodation, entertainment and cultural experiences. This also suggests a role for policy in improving the ease with which residents in the surrounding LGAs can visit the ACT. At present, residents of LGAs surrounding the ACT have limited access to public transport into the ACT and return - adults cannot use the well-established and comprehensive transport services dedicated for use by schoolchildren.

National

Canberra has strong transport links right around Australia because the Commonwealth Public Service and the seat of national government are located in the ACT, stimulating frequent travel between Canberra and the rest of the nation. But once outside the commuter belt region, most of the ACT's economic linkages are with regions that are several hundred kilometres away and thus its main road links and air links are more important than its links with small towns in southern NSW.

The next most important regions to the ACT for economic interactions are Sydney, Melbourne, the south coast of NSW, Brisbane, the rest of Queensland and Adelaide, followed by nearby regional centres such as Cooma, Yass, Goulburn and the ski-fields. Businesses in the ACT also buy from and sell to countries all around the world, trading more with some countries overseas than with nearby regions.

Roads

The total road length in the ACT is 2,595 km (2007) – almost all of this is in urban roads, with a total replacement value of \$5.5 billion . Currently there is a car for every three people and the car remains the main form of transport in the ACT (at the 2006 census, nearly 84% of journeys to work by ACT residents were made by car) – but this is causing increasing traffic congestion and pollution, detrimental for both the environment and Canberra's liveability.

There are four major inter-regional road linkages from the ACT:

- *The Federal Highway* - an 80 km dual carriageway road that connects the ACT to the Hume Highway - the main route to Sydney; it also connects the northern end of Canberra to the Kings Highway (via Macs Reef Road) and more locally connects the ACT with Goulburn.
- *The Barton Highway* - a 62 km highway that connects to the Hume Highway and forms part of the main route from Canberra to Melbourne, Adelaide and south-west NSW, and more locally connects the ACT with Yass and Murrumbateman.
- *The Monaro Highway* - runs south to Cooma, ultimately connecting with the Princes Highway at Cann River in Victoria. It also connects Canberra to the NSW ski fields and forms part of the main route from Sydney to the ski fields.
- *The Kings Highway* - is the main road to the NSW south coast, travelling through Queanbeyan and several small NSW towns, and connecting with the Princes Highway on the coast at Batemans Bay.

Majura Road is part of National Highway 23 and forms the connecting link between the Federal and Monaro Highways. It is significant because it forms part of the ACT's north-south transport corridor, providing the link in the route between Sydney and the ski fields, and the truck freight bypass of Canberra.

There are three main roads linking the ACT with Queanbeyan: Lanyon Drive, Canberra Avenue and Pialligo Avenue. Canberra Avenue is the busiest road link between Queanbeyan and the ACT; Lanyon Drive, currently being upgraded, connects Queanbeyan to the Monaro Highway, and Pialligo Avenue runs from north Queanbeyan to connect to the Canberra Airport. Currently, in excess of 25,000 people travel between Queanbeyan and Canberra every day, and this number is predicted to rise as Queanbeyan's population increases over the next 20-25 years (projected to exceed 70,000 by 2031).

Buses

ACTION buses run services within the ACT, but do not operate services into NSW. Deane's Buslines service routes into the Queanbeyan area, and Transborder operates into the Yass area.



Rail

A spur on the Sydney to Melbourne rail line currently services Canberra. Services are limited, and slower than coach travel options.

Light Rail – a proposed light rail system has the potential to improve the sustainability of Canberra's transport, and its productivity and liveability, by decreasing road congestion and commuting times. It would provide an opportunity for Canberra to lead in policy that would reduce the impact and severity of climate change, and demonstrate leadership in innovation.

A proposal for light rail for the ACT was made to Infrastructure Australia (TAMS, December 2008), for a 54.43 km route that would include the Tuggeranong, Kingston, Belconnen and Gungahlin routes, running in dedicated reserves alongside the roadway where possible. Such a light rail system would provide the backbone of a fully integrated set of transport policies that would make the ACT more attractive to skilled labour, and would support diversified economic opportunities including education and high technology industries.

Further exploration of this proposal could be undertaken to include Queanbeyan on the Light Rail route, or to replace the light rail option with trams.

Proposed Light Rail Map



Source <http://www.actlightrail.info/>

High Speed Rail – refers to trains travelling at 250 km/h or more (speeds are increasing, with trains in China now running routinely at 350 km/h), on purpose-built tracks, focused primarily on the movement of people, but can also be used for high-value freight such as mail. Invariably powered by electricity, with an outstanding safety record, high speed rail services are now being extended, built or developed in many countries across the world to provide transport, energy efficiency and environmental benefits.

Previous proposals for high speed rail in eastern Australia stalled because there was not a clear understanding between the public and private sectors on what their respective funding contributions should be. However, the Canberra Business Council (CBC) recommends that high-speed rail should be reconsidered for Australia – see *High Speed Rail for Australia – an opportunity for the 21st century*; a submission by the CBC, October 2009. The submission notes that the Sydney–Melbourne route is the fourth busiest air service in the world, with more than 60 flights each way per day between the two cities.

The next step would entail a scoping study to examine a national project for a high-speed rail route from Melbourne to Sydney via Canberra, and from Sydney to Brisbane via Newcastle and the Gold Coast, developed in stages with the cost shared between the public and private sectors. The popularity and success of high-speed rail overseas indicates its ability to generate financial and environmental benefits. The scoping study would consider the most appropriate staging of the project, financing options including the roles of the public and private sectors, structuring options, its contribution to the freight task, and it would develop a business case to investigate the possibility of powering the system from gas-fired generators supplemented by renewable energy sources.

The Regional Development Australia network could have a role in the HSR project development, uniting the relevant RDA organisations along the proposed route to co-ordinate support and progress the scoping study.



Canberra Airport

The *Canberra Airport 2009 Master Plan* sets out a vision and strategic direction for the airport's growth over the next twenty years that has significant potential impacts for the ACT and region such as enhancing the attractiveness of Canberra as a location for business and tourism. Key elements are to facilitate the efficient movement of people and freight in and out of the ACT by developing the airport as a multi-modal transport hub - to maximise the benefits of airline, potential high speed rail, bus and regional coach services to the region, and providing first-class services and terminal facilities appropriate for Australia's capital.

The main economic value of the airport to the ACT community is as a transport gateway for the region that provides convenient flights directly to a range of destinations, and over time, the likelihood of it providing direct flights to more Australian cities and some international destinations such as Auckland and Singapore. The Airport also facilitates the economic growth of the region by bringing in new businesses and new jobs.

In 1998, Canberra Airport Pty Limited, a Canberra-based family business, purchased the lease of the aviation facilities, land and infrastructure known as Canberra Airport, including the development rights.



Canberra Airport, circa 1970



Canberra Airport, circa 1998

Source: www.canberraairport.com.au/PDF/masterplan/.../1_Introduction.pdf

RDA ACT Transport Objectives

- ★ Facilitate development of local, regional and national transport systems for the ACT and region that are sustainable, affordable and accessible.
- ★ Coordinate transport networks across all levels of government and with private transport providers and other stakeholders to provide integrated transport policies and programs to benefit the ACT and region.

Prospective Actions

LOCAL

- ★ Facilitate implementation of transport options that will achieve a more sustainable transport system for the ACT that places less reliance on the private car and promotes a stronger role for public transport, walking and cycling.
- ★ Support projects that would provide major transport corridors across the ACT, making it easier to get in, out and across Canberra, and lightening the traffic load on Canberra's internal roads.

REGIONAL

- ★ Facilitate implementation of a regional transport network, supporting cross-jurisdictional and cross-sector (public and private) planning activities addressing transport provision between the ACT and surrounding region.
- ★ Work to enhance accessibility into Canberra for those commuting in to work from the surrounding region, focussing particularly on the transport corridors linking Canberra with Queanbeyan, and the north-south corridor.
- ★ Support progress of efficient city by-pass mechanisms between the Barton, Federal, Kings and Monaro Highways (plus other relevant feeder routes) that will facilitate commuter, visitor and freight movements, provide greater scope for ACT and Queanbeyan transport initiatives, and reduce loads on ACT internal roads.

NATIONAL

- ★ Support progression of a scoping study to examine the national project for a High Speed Rail route from Melbourne to Sydney via Canberra.



Potential Initiatives

LOCAL

- ★ Explore the potential for ACT light rail/trams.
- ★ Explore the potential for a bicycle use program whereby residents and tourists can access a bicycle from a variety of designated sites around the city, use it (hourly rate), then return it – international precedents in London, Paris, Barcelona and Vienna.
- ★ Facilitate discussions to progress development of dedicated public transport services between the ACT's major urban centres, that link up with terminuses for regional commuter services and with the Bike-n-Ride project.

REGIONAL

- ★ Provide support for the Majura Road upgrade project (proposal to Infrastructure Australia) to improve the north-south transport corridor through the ACT, making it the primary road connection between the Federal and Monaro Highways. Such an upgrade would improve traffic flow during peak periods, help to form an adequate Canberra bypass for freight, and improve traffic flow on alternative routes such as Northbourne Avenue.
- ★ Establish links with the new Eastern Regional Transport Taskforce and other regional transport groups to look at ways to improve regional transport links, particularly between Canberra and Queanbeyan.
- ★ Develop a Canberra Regional Transport Plan/Report in consultation with stakeholders from local, NSW, ACT and Commonwealth government agencies, including input from community, business and transport operators. Identify cross regional interdependencies and barriers to action.
- ★ Explore the potential to expand development of the proposed EPIC Park-n-Ride Centre (terminuses for regional commuter services) by providing additional centres at Canberra Airport and South Canberra to reduce commuter traffic into the city and major suburban centres.

NATIONAL

- ★ Co-ordinate the engagement of the Regional Development Australia network to provide support for the High Speed Rail project, particularly focussing on including the RDAs that represent the regions located along the proposed route.

Background from existing transport plans

The Canberra Spatial Plan (2004) – is a plan for the physical structure of the city. It aims to reduce the need for car travel and to encourage transport use away from cars. It sets out how future urban development will be contained within about 15 kilometres of the city centre, with at least 50% of all residential development expected to occur within 7.5 kms of the city centre. By containing development in this way, employment locations will remain in close proximity to residential areas which also reduces the need for long distance travel, reduces demand for parking in the town centres and helps to reduce the costs of infrastructure and maintenance, as well as costs associated with vehicle pollution and accidents.

The Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT (2004) sets long term goals for an efficient regional transport system covering all modes of transport – private cars, public transport, cycling and walking, and expresses the ACT Government's objectives of encouraging people to use more environmentally friendly modes of transport – public transport, walking and cycling, while maintaining high levels of accessibility, lowering overall costs and achieving economic and social goals for Canberra. This intention to achieve a dramatic increase in the proportion of trips made on public transport rather than in a private car identifies improved service as crucial to the achievement of this strategy.

The ACT Integrated Transport Framework (2008) - Ready for the Future (August 2008) – has been produced to improve the efficiency of Canberra's whole transport system, reduce congestion and transport emissions and provide better transport options for the ACT community. It notes the strong relationships that exist between each of the components of the transport system: roads, parking, public transport, cycling, walking and supporting infrastructure, plus the ACT's increasing freight task, and that these issues cannot be considered effectively in isolation. It aims for a sustainable transport system that meets the current and future needs of the ACT community – safe, reliable and adaptable to changing circumstances through the provision of adequate infrastructure and by encouraging greater use of public transport.



Sustainable Transport Action Plan 2010–2016 – The ACT Government is developing a *Sustainable Transport Action Plan* to outline how a smarter transport system for Canberra and the surrounding region will be achieved. It sets a new transport vision: for our city to have more transport choice and equitable access – a system that will reduce the overall cost of the transport system while maintaining high levels of accessibility. Providing convenient alternatives to private cars will shift transport patterns towards more use of walking, cycling and public transport that will:

- reduce traffic congestion;
- provide health benefits such as reduced road accidents;
- provide environmental benefits such as reduced air pollution;
- provide the community with more transport options; and
- reduce the cost of building and maintaining transport infrastructure.

ACT Strategic Public Transport Network Plan – sets out the long term actions that will need to be taken over the next twenty years to achieve the ACT Government's sustainable transport goals including the *Sustainable Transport Plan* goal that 16% of all work trips be on public transport by 2031. It offers four types of service that will provide a complete system for travel throughout the city including:

- **Rapid service** – a frequent and fast all day service with widely paced stops to achieve a high average speed for long trips across the city. (Light rail might be an option to buses for this service. Speed target currently proposed as an average speed of 40 km/hr including stops.)
- **Frequent Local service** is intended to serve local high-density corridors so is frequent all day, but makes more stops and therefore runs more slowly.
- **Peak Express** runs only during peak commute hours and only in the peak commute direction, with long non-stop segments designed to serve commute demand.
- **Coverage service** is all day local service that circulates through low-density suburbs where patronage potential is low, so runs at low frequencies (Need to balance the social inclusion benefits of spending a dollar on coverage service in low density areas against the environmental benefits of spending the same dollar on service in a denser area where it would carry more passengers.)

Modelling undertaken for this study shows that even without changes in fuel prices, parking prices, or fares, the recommended network would increase the share of morning peak trips on public transport to 11.4% (from about 7.7% when last measured in 2006).

- Worldwide experience is that low-density areas do not generate high patronage, even with high levels of service – high patronage results only from the combination of high-quality service and relatively dense development.
- Real-time information on public transport operations is becoming increasingly common e.g. informing customers of delays to services via electronic displays at stops or via a mobile phone.
- Note that smaller buses are not cheaper to operate as most of the running cost relates to driver wages.
- A Bike-n-Ride would be suitable at selected Rapid stops and best-practice innovations include integrating bicycle storage; an investigation of Bike-n-Ride is being undertaken and will form part of this Plan.
- A *Draft Parking Strategy* was released for community consultation in 2007 identifying a range of measures to manage parking in the ACT including: the appropriate level of provision, the future supply of parking in the city and town centres, the price of parking and management of parking demand. This Strategy proposes to shift policies more towards demand management rather than satisfaction, striking a balance between demand for parking, availability of parking and the price of parking within a broader goal of sustainable transport which encourages more walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- New cycling and walking strategies are being developed that will review and update relevant ACT cycling and walking policies, with a focus on developing walking and cycling as safe and viable modes for commuters.

ACT Budget 2010–2011: the transport investment of \$97 million will be used to help the community move around the city safely and easily; reduce road congestion; reduce transport emissions by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport and improving the road networks; and create a safe transport system that minimises the risk of crashes.

Funding has been provided to support improvement of public transport, including funding for a new RedEx demonstration bus service project – a service running every 15 minutes between Gungahlin, Dickson, City, Russell, Barton and Kingston. Also to conduct feasibility studies for two new Park-n-Ride sites, improvements to public transport infrastructure and completing a range of bus priority measures and related infrastructure at the Belconnen Town Centre.



Focus is on making public transport more attractive by reducing travel times and increasing the reliability of services including the design and construction of bus priority measures on Canberra Avenue (\$8.2 million) and Northbourne Avenue.

The *Building the Future* program includes \$250 million over five years for investment in transport system infrastructure.

NSW Government 2010–2011 Budget has allocated \$48 million for roads in the Monaro region, including \$6.7 million for upgrading the Kings Highway between Queanbeyan and Bungendore, and \$3.8 million towards the duplication of Lanyon Drive between the Jerrabomberra roundabout and the ACT border.

Canberra Business Council – Planning and Infrastructure Task Force (CBC PandITF)

In 2008–09 the CBC (PandITF) lodged planning and infrastructure submissions to government including a *Light Rail submission* (ACT Government); *High Speed Rail submission* (Federal and ACT Governments); and a *Response to the Canberra Airport Draft Master Plan*.

The Taskforce also provided a submission to Infrastructure Australia for funding under the \$26 billion *Building Australia* grants program; its recommendations, also incorporated into the ACT Government's submission to Infrastructure Australia, included:

- road works including the Majura Parkway;
- high speed rail from Melbourne to Brisbane via Canberra, Sydney and Newcastle; and
- light rail for the ACT.

None of these proposals was accepted in the first round of announcements, although the proposal to upgrade Majura Road remains on a future short-list

RDA ACT Transport Sub-Committee Program Proposal

At the RDA ACT Strategic Planning meeting held in November 2009, transport was identified as one of the RDA ACT Committee's three priority areas, and a Transport Sub-Committee was formed to progress transport initiatives for the ACT and region. The Committee submitted a Transport Program proposal along the following lines:

The **Transport Program** will facilitate cross-jurisdictional and cross-sector (public and private) planning activities using a three stage process to develop a *Canberra Regional Transport Plan/ Report* in consultation with stakeholders from local, NSW, ACT and Commonwealth Government agencies, community, business and transport operators.

The outcomes from the Program will be a *Canberra Regional Transport Discussion Paper*, to be followed by stakeholder review and consultations and then a *Transport Options Report*, with recommendations for relevant stakeholders.

Regional Public Transport Facilities

The proposed establishment of transport Park-n-Ride hubs in major suburban centres, and particularly at EPIC, may enhance the feasibility of private or public transport services from regional areas to link with the new transport hubs. Efficiencies can be gained from increased patronage of direct centre-to-centre services and this contributes to less vehicle loading on key service roads as well as within the civic precinct.

Advocacy for Majura Parkway

Support for the development of a major diversionary route – the Majura Parkway, can play a major role in diverting heavy through-traffic loads from the centre of Canberra, thus freeing up opportunities for faster transit times and greater operating efficiencies for local public transport services. A Queanbeyan by-pass would further enhance efficiencies for traffic flows connecting the Federal and Barton Highways with the Kings and Monaro Highways – benefiting the region as a whole.

Cross Border Movement Efficiencies

Links need to be established with the new Eastern Regional Transport Taskforce that has been created to look at ways to improve transport links between the two cities, including the future development of Canberra Avenue as a major transit corridor. Developments in the Queanbeyan region are critical to traffic movement performance in the ACT.

Other factors to consider include housing affordability, availability of employment opportunities or lifestyle choices that result in a very significant number of regional residents transiting to and from Canberra on a daily basis. In addition many regional residents also access infrastructure, amenities or services in Canberra (being the major regional centre) on a regular basis.



4 The Way Forward

4.1 Opportunities

Each of the ACT's Focus and Priority areas have been explored in some detail in Section 3 of the *Regional Plan* – providing context, and discussing objectives, actions, partnerships and initiatives for each. Opportunities and challenges are incorporated into these Section 3 outlines, but some of the main opportunities are identified below.

Innovative Economy

The ACT is well placed to further diversify its economic base and engage in the emerging economy at the forefront of a targeted set of industries or centres of excellence. The ACT has an established base of high calibre tertiary education institutions and research organisations and an emerging cluster of research and development and innovative organisations to support the burgeoning innovative economy.

The ACT is the most knowledge-intensive regional economy in Australia, with the most highly educated population, propinquity to federal government agencies, tertiary and research institutions, and easy access to stakeholders due to a geographically small, relatively centralised area.

Innovative and sustainable economies should attract and retain talent and skills through the provision of quality communications, infrastructure, housing, education facilities and safe environment and excellent support services.

Education

The skills, capacity and reputation of ACT tertiary institutions, together with their connections to local businesses and research and development organisations provide the potential to significantly increase their economic contribution to the region.

The ACT has a number of high quality tertiary education and training facilities that are attracting an emerging cluster of innovative organisations to the area, forming clusters of education excellence, particularly in the areas of information communication technologies and environmental sustainability. Training of skilled workers is an important role of the education and training institutions, and one of the ACT's priority focus areas – to address the needs of the ACT labour market.

Transport and Infrastructure

There is an opportunity to develop a multi-modal transport hub centred on the Canberra Airport and maximise the benefits of airline, potential high speed rail, bus and regional coach services to improve national and international linkages. Canberra has strong links across Australia due to the seat of national government being located in the ACT. Many of the ACT's economic linkages are with regions that are several hundred kilometres away and thus its main road links and air links are vital.

The development of enhanced facilities suitable to host major national and international events would also form an appropriate alignment with both the nation's capital and a knowledge intensive economy.

Environment

The Mercer Worldwide Quality of Life Survey ranked Canberra 26th globally in a survey of 420 cities against criteria of education, the environment, housing, sporting facilities and the range of leisure and entertainment facilities. Canberra was rated 21st in the world's top 100 eco-cities. The ACT Government has stated its objective of the ACT becoming the nation's leader in sustainable environmental technologies, and the solar capital, and has set a target of being a carbon neutral city by 2060.



4.2 Challenges

Communications

Quality communications are essential to a knowledge-based economy. The ACT currently has the highest level of home internet users in Australia at 82%. Canberra's population includes a sizeable aggregation of users of high-speed data services, and already 74% of the population are connected to broadband. To build on this is vital, and the ACT and region should be identified as a priority for the roll out of the National Broadband Network.

Infrastructure

Prior to self-government, the Commonwealth Government built and maintained the ACT's infrastructure often to the highest standards. In 1989, the ACT government inherited a legacy of variable quality of roads, schools, health facilities, public housing and water infrastructure and now needs to maintain this infrastructure on far smaller financial reserves.

There is also an identified need for the Commonwealth Government to boost funding to the areas in the ACT that remain under its jurisdiction.

Infrastructure Planning

The level of new housing required to improve the ACT's quantity of affordable housing increases the demands on the ACT's infrastructure. There will be 17,000 residential dwellings released over the next four years to support the growth of the city. Because local building and construction capacity is limited and a significant proportion can be absorbed by a just a few large projects, the timing of projects needs to be carefully considered as part of infrastructure planning. Recognising the capacity of industry to stimulate the wider economy means there also needs to be a focus on developing local skills and attracting new skilled workers to the ACT.

Employment

The ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry has identified a current skills shortage in the ACT and this will remain a challenge over the coming decade as baby boomers retire. Commuter regions around the ACT are important for providing skills to Canberra, and measures to remove barriers and make trans-border movements easier for people who want to supply the ACT labour market must be explored. Generally,

residents of areas surrounding the ACT have little access to public transport into the ACT and return, and road access is in many cases via major highways shared with through-traffic travelling interstate.

RDA ACT notes the Federal Treasury philosophy of the need to 'import' younger tax paying workers to provide support funding for the expected large increase in retirees. However the current problem of housing affordability will worsen if the large increase in retirees creates a decrease in the average income. The rising cost of living will result in disincentives for skilled young people to move into the ACT. Measures may have to be introduced to up skill some of the existing workforce and attract highly skilled and experienced retirees back into productive part-time employment.

Education

A key challenge is the develop links with business, industrial, commercial, educational and professional organisations to facilitate the skilling of workers to meet business demands.

Sustainability

The ACT Government has a resolve to make Canberra Australia's exemplar sustainable city, yet Canberrans currently have the highest carbon emissions from passenger car transport per capita of any Australian capital city, and have amongst the highest carbon emissions per capita of any city in the world.

Canberra's unique planning philosophy with its wide geographic spread and large areas of green belts exacerbates the ACT's internal transport issues. Canberra has relatively low population densities dispersed over a large area, and this makes it difficult and expensive for public transport to service the needs of the population. However, in the current environment of climate change and rising fuel prices, a number of new transport policies and projects are require to address these challenges.

The challenge is not only the provision of transport and services, but consolidation of urban growth and the increasing of densities to allow for more efficient transport and service delivery. This in itself comes with its own set of hurdles, mainly the persuasion of Canberrans who seem set on having single dwelling housing on large suburban blocks.



4.3 Strategy for Economic Development and Job Creation

The *Regional Plan* template includes a *Strategy for Economic Growth and Job Creation* as a priority of the Plan. However, the ACT has no pressing need to stimulate job creation as it currently maintains the lowest unemployment rate in Australia – currently at 3.3%.

The priority for the ACT in the area of jobs is rather to address the need to attract skilled workers to the ACT to fill the many employment gaps in the Canberra labour market.

4.4 Strategy for Economic Development and Skills Attraction

As for Opportunities and Challenges, Section 3 of the *Regional Plan* explores each of the ACT's strategies for economic development and skills attraction that have been identified by RDA ACT in some detail, particularly in Focus area 3.1: Business/Innovation/Economy. Again, some of the main points have been extrapolated below.

The Skills Crisis

Skills shortages remain a challenge for the ACT. There is currently a critical skills crisis that is slowing economic development, and this is predicted to be exacerbated by the impending retirement – over the next 5 to 10 years, of a large number of baby boomers which is expected to result in the loss of some 40,000 people from the local labour force.

Strategies to attract skills to the ACT

- ★ Support government programs to attract skilled workers

The ACT Government's *Live in Canberra* program encourages skilled workers to live and work in Canberra. It is a best-practice example of government, business, tertiary and Commonwealth sectors working together to tackle skills shortages, and forming partnerships that bring together a range of businesses and institutions concerned about the effects of the national skills shortage on the ACT economy and could be supported, perhaps in a formal arrangement, by RDA ACT.

In 2010, the *Live in Canberra* program participated at eight careers and employment focussed expos that included inaugural visits to Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne, with a first-time international campaign conducted in New Zealand. Twenty organisations representing a wide range of sectors: recruitment, health, finance, hospitality, construction, education, real estate and government have signed on to support the program in 2010-11, with partners benefiting from the promotion of their businesses at the expos and having access to skilled workers who are considering a move to the ACT.

★ Transport initiatives

Develop transport initiatives that will make it easier for commuters from the ACT's surrounding regions to bring skilled labour to Canberra – make it easier for people to access and therefore to supply the Canberra labour market. Initiatives could include developing an internal public transport system (developing bus initiatives such as REDEX; developing cycling and walking options; introducing trams, light rail); facilitating a regional transport network that incorporates transport hubs to link commuters with good public transport options in outer areas; and also supporting the project to bring High Speed Rail into the city to link in to the Canberra Airport.

★ Education

Facilitate the skilling of workers to meet business demand through education and training initiatives. Provide incentives to increase participation in tertiary education and essential trades by people from surrounding regions. Promote the ACT as the place to go to receive the highest standard of education and training i.e. quality education, training and teaching opportunities, within a supportive cultural and social experience. Provide support for programs that aid international students to study in the ACT.

Ensure that the next generation of skilled workers know that Canberra is a great place to find work after they graduate. Develop more formal pathways to encourage regional students coming to Canberra to study to take up work in the ACT. *The Live in Canberra* program also works closely with Canberra's tertiary institutions including the University of Canberra, Australian National University and the Canberra Institute of Technology, to help attract students to Canberra.



★ Affordable Housing

Provide support to explore provision of accessible and affordable student housing, and investigate a project concept to encourage the provision of affordable short-term hostel-style accommodation that could be made available to skilled workers (trades) coming to the ACT to take up shorter-term contract employment.

★ Centres of excellence

Develop business clusters and educational centres of excellence that will attract the most innovative businesses to Canberra and high calibre workers should follow; for example, in the areas of sustainable environment practices and information communication technologies.

★ Tourism

Canberra's milestone centenary, to be celebrated in 2013, provokes reflection on the past and planning for the future. The Centenary celebrations will provide opportunities for RDA ACT to continue to advance the growth and development of the ACT, with the ultimate aim of promoting the region's prosperity, and its residents' well being.



Promote the ACT as the centre for national business, and help to support construction of appropriate facilities for local, regional, national and international networking and major events – an 'Australia Forum'. The people will follow.

4.5 Stakeholder Consultations and Report Review Process

A separate document has been published to complement the *Regional Plan* that includes progress towards developing a database of ACT and region stakeholders – listed by focus areas. Also forming part of this additional document is a developing database of stakeholders' recent documentation – reports, plans and strategies.

Both these databases will be placed on the RDA ACT website: www.rdaact.org.au and are open for development by stakeholders.

There already exists a broad and fairly complete range of stakeholders across the focus areas in the ACT, and there are many consultative mechanisms already in place. RDA ACT is seeking membership of these established networks and forums to encourage stakeholder contributions to the *Regional Plan*, and to progress the Vision and Mission of the organisation. RDA ACT will also build less formal networks appropriate for progressing identified projects and supporting or facilitating the provision of services to the ACT and region.

Process to review and update the *Regional Plan*

- Lodge the *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2010* – 30 August 2010 (produced as an informal spiral-bound A4 document; graphically design to include photos etc).
- Potential to launch the *Regional Plan* to facilitate stakeholder engagement with RDA ACT.
- Nominate one Member of the new Committee to lead and facilitate each of the focus areas (Committee meeting to be held 26 August 2010):
 - > Innovative Economy
 - > Education and Employment*
 - > Environmental Sustainability*
 - > Serving the Community
 - > Infrastructure and Connectivity
 - > Regional Development Governance
 - > Community and Housing
 - > Tourism/Arts, Culture and Heritage
 - > Transport*

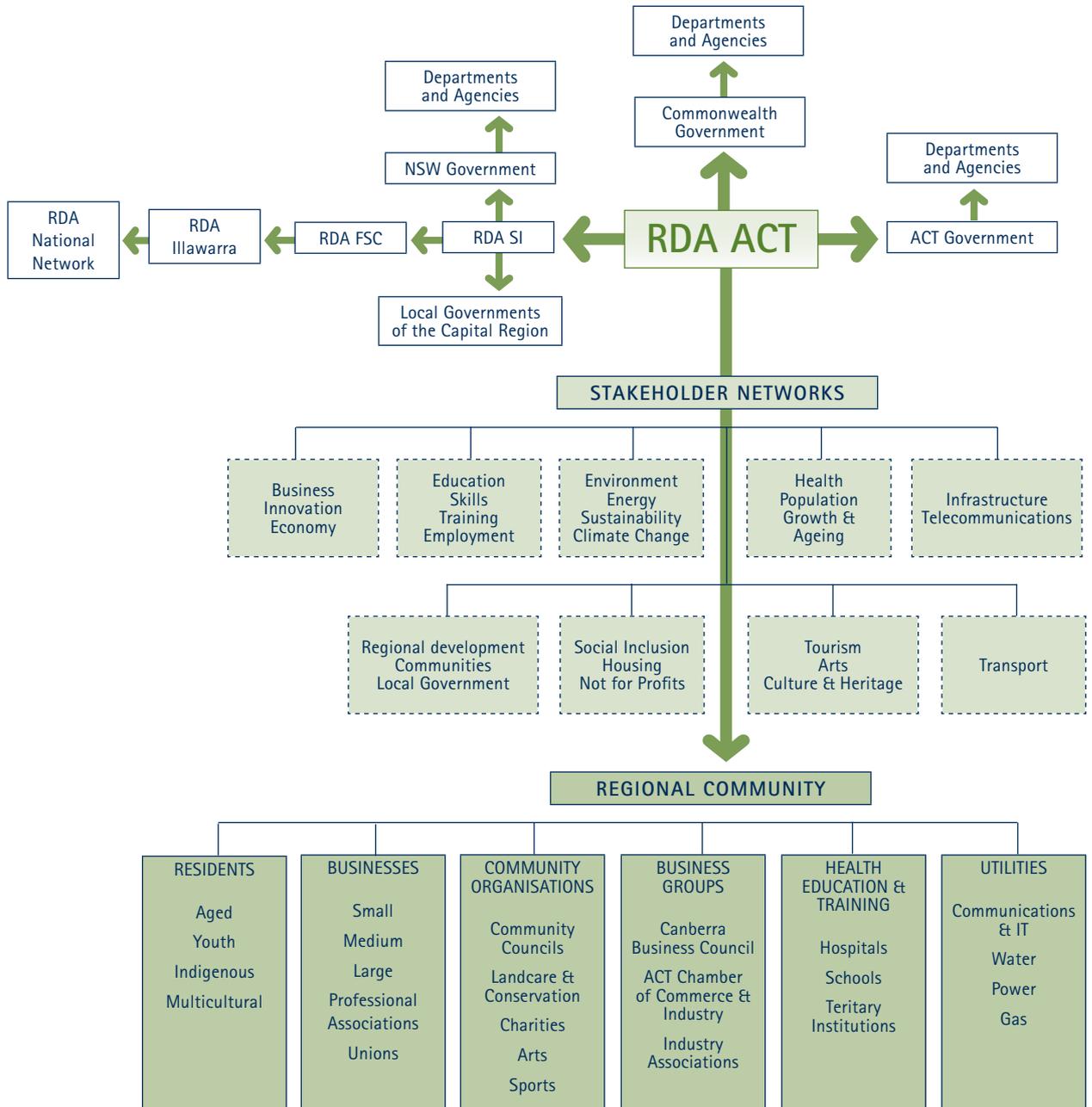


- Committee to re-assess allocation of focus area priorities – indicated by asterisks* (September meeting).
- Secretariat to prepare Discussion Papers on each of the focus areas drawn from the information contained in the *Regional Plan* and present to appropriate key stakeholders as background material for future discussion i.e. face-to-face meetings, networking forums (September/October)
- Request stakeholder input – meet face-to-face with key stakeholders; also identify stakeholder network members and attend or organise separate forums of these stakeholders to consult and brainstorm on each of the focus/priority areas – also provides good networking opportunities for Members (October/November).
- Incorporate stakeholder input from meetings and networking forums into the *Regional Plan* to provide information towards a *Draft Strategic Regional Plan 2011* (December 2010/January-February 2011); progress identified project concepts with less formal stakeholder networks.
- Meet with RDA SI to collaborate on regional issues and projects of common interest – August 2010 (EOs), also Far South Coast and Illawarra; September 2010 (joint Committee meeting); and February 2011.
- Write the *Draft ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2011* (March)
- Stakeholder review – electronically distribute *Draft ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2011* to relevant stakeholders and request feedback (April)
- Incorporate stakeholder feedback (April/May)
- Produce and graphic design the final *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2011* (May/June)
- Lodge, launch and distribute the *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2011* (30 June 2011). It is envisaged that the information provide in this *Regional Plan* will support government policy development and inform program design, while providing valuable information on the state of the ACT and region, and identifying key issues, needs and priorities for action.

In conjunction with this process of information review and development, new projects will be identified, project concepts that have been identified as feasible and relevant will be progressed, and project efficacy and achievements will be monitored and reported to stakeholders and governments.

RDA ACT notes the additional information that has been provided to RDAs by Parsons Brinkerhoff in the form of a more formally structured *Template*, a *Resource Kit*, and *Supplementary Guidance for Regional Plans* to assist with future regional planning activities.

4.6 Stakeholders' Flow Chart



4.7 Conclusion

As the project to write this *Regional Plan* unfolded, a colleague shared with me the Plan's analogy to a coconut shy, and this has formed the inspiration for its writing.

This first *Regional Plan* has no pretension to be a perfect document – the information it contains is not completely inclusive of the many and diverse points of view of all ACT and region stakeholders, and it's state of the region perspective is therefore truncated.

However, what it does represent is a starting point upon which to build – a document that stakeholders can reference to identify whether their priority issues have been included – that is, provided to the ACT and Commonwealth Governments. Whether their concerns have been well-represented, or whether they would like to provide more information that will build the second and future iterations of this *Regional Plan* to be a more comprehensive, representative and therefore a more valuable resource in the planning of the ACT and region's future.

Inclusion in the context of this Plan means – provided to the ACT and Commonwealth governments (Chief Minister's Department and Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government respectively), who jointly have supplied the funding to support the compilation of this *Regional Plan*.

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments fund the Regional Development Australia network with the objective of forming a link between governments and regional communities, and providing a communication channel along which information and messages can be provided back and forth. Including information in the *Regional Plan* is a mechanism by which business, industry and their associations, educational institutions, and community groups and individuals can get a message to governments that identifies local issues and suggests local solutions. Everyone is listening!

This Plan is already beginning to pull threads together to form a holistic picture that suggests various options for the way forward and partnerships to achieve objectives. The prospective actions and proposed initiatives contained in the Plan are not designed to be definitive; rather they have been drawn to stimulate thoughts and discussions and to help formulate the building blocks of future plans.

RDA ACT thanks readers who have persevered to reach this conclusion to the Plan document, and hope that you have been inspired to strategic contemplation of the holistic issues facing the ACT and region that will stimulate constructive discussions and build partnerships between stakeholders. This *Regional Plan 2010* also forms the basis for the *Regional Plan 2011* that will move closer to establishing the ACT and region to be the best it can be, through innovative planning approaches that will stimulate its development as a leader in sustainability and liveability into the future.

So, please feel welcome to 'have a shy' and provide updated and additional information that will be used to inform the next iteration of the *Regional Plan*. We look forward to discussions with all ACT and region stakeholders over the coming year, and to producing a holistic, overarching and visionary *ACT Strategic Regional Plan 2011*.



5 Appendices

5.1 RDA ACT Focus and Priority Areas

Focus Area One – Business/Innovation/Economy

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<p>★ Attract skilled workers to participate in the ACT labour force to alleviate the on-going skills shortages.</p>	<p>★ Support current initiatives to attract skilled workers and their families to live in the ACT to help meet demand the demand for skilled labour across a range of sectors.</p> <p>★ Support projects that encourage regional students into ACT tertiary education institutions by promoting studying opportunities and facilitating support for students through their studies; e.g. student accommodation.</p> <p>★ Investigate a project concept to encourage the provision of affordable short-term hostel-style accommodation that could be made available to skilled workers (trades) coming to the ACT to take up shorter-term contract employment.</p>	<p>★ Tertiary and Training Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANU • ACU • CIT • UC • UNSW @ ADFA <p>★ Country Education Foundation</p> <p>★ Bendigo Bank</p>	<p>★ Facilitate regional student access to ACT tertiary and training institutions to expand the skilled workforce.</p> <p>★ Promote the ACT as a positive place for skilled workers to live. The 'Live in Canberra' promotion is aimed particularly at skilled workers to come to live in Canberra and capitalise on Canberra's lifestyle benefits.</p> <p>★ For further information see 3.2 Education/ Skills/ Training/ Employment.</p> <p>★ Facilitate access to the ACT for commuters from the surrounding ACT region.</p> <p>★ For further information see 3.9 Transport.</p>
<p>★ Encourage ACT and region businesses to adopt environmentally sustainable practices that will enhance their business operations.</p>	<p>★ Promote environmentally sustainable practices to ACT and region small and medium sized businesses. Link these businesses with information and networks that will assist them to adopt environmentally sustainable practices while increasing profits.</p> <p>★ Explore the concept of a Green $\sqrt{\text{Tick}}$ project that would formally recognise and promote local and regional businesses that adopt sustainable practices.</p>		

Focus Area One – Business/Innovation/Economy (Continued)

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<p>★ Progress projects that will stimulate economic growth for the ACT economy and encourage business development in the ACT and region.</p>	<p>★ Develop ICT precincts in partnership with universities and business to capitalise on the highly educated population and knowledge intensive regional economy.</p>	<p>★ Tertiary and Training Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANU • ACU • CIT • UC • UNSW @ ADFA <p>★ R&D Firms</p> <p>★ Canberra Business Council</p> <p>★ Australian Information Industry Association</p>	<p>★ Prepare a regional ICT Information structure plan to coordinate development of ICT technology.</p>
	<p>★ Develop a regional branding initiative (local produce, low food miles) – geographically define the 'ACT and region; identify stakeholders and facilitate engagement and collaboration between local region food and wine producers and a centre that can co-ordinate distribution of their local-region branded/labelled produce to local retailers and tourism outlets.</p> <p>★ Facilitate a case study to develop a supply chain/cluster for regional food and wine products, to be promoted and marketed by local retailers as gourmet produce with low food miles.</p>		
	<p>★ Promote the ACT as the centre for national business, providing facilities for local, regional, national and international networking and major events.</p>		



Focus Area Two – Education/Skills/Training/Employment

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Address the ACT skills shortage by encouraging increased participation in tertiary education and essential trades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Identifying areas of training and educational need in collaboration with business, industry and government. ★ Supporting students/ trainees/ apprentices with appropriate financial recompense to achieve minimum living standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Department of Education and Training ★ Commonwealth Department of Education ★ Tertiary and Training Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANU • ACU • CIT • UC • UNSW @ ADFA ★ Business and industry associations – refer to Stakeholder Appendix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide targeted training and education in areas identified as particularly in need of skilled workers. ★ Establish a network of stakeholders to determine how best to progress providing satisfactory recompense for up-skilled. ★ Promote the establishment of a Commonwealth fund, along the lines of a HECS liability, to upgrade trainee/apprenticeship wages to at least labourer level during training to improve participation and completion rates.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Export ACT education to the regional, national and international markets to promote the ACT as a leader in the provision of quality education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Increase the percentage share of the ACT educational institutions in the education market, and further promote the ACT as a leader of educational attainment in Australia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Chief Minister's Department ★ Tertiary and Training Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANU • ACU • CIT • UC • UNSW @ ADFA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide affordable accommodation for students close to their educational institution, services, shops and transport. ★ Explore the potential to develop student villages within existing town centres that have established access to services and transport. ★ Actively promote ACT universities to international and local students as a place for educational excellence to increase the ACT's share of the education market with collaborative marketing of ACT educational facilities taking a regional approach, rather than one from individual universities.

Focus Area Two – Education/Skills/Training/Employment (Continued)

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<p>★ Promote the ACT to interstate skilled workers to facilitate a reduction in the immediate skills shortage.</p>			<p>★ Promote the ACT and region as a positive place for skilled workers to live through such programs as Live in Canberra.</p> <p>★ Enhance the transport and commuter infrastructure to expand the scope of commuters available to service skills shortages.</p> <p>★ For further information see 3.1 Business/ Innovation/ Economy.</p>
<p>★ Create an enterprise economy by education institutions being drivers or partners in the development of new directions in the local emerging enterprising economy.</p>	<p>★ Explore and develop a high level project to identify how educational institutions can adopt to meet the needs of emerging enterprises within the ACT economy e.g. environmentally sustainable practices.</p>	<p>★ Tertiary and Training Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANU • ACU • CIT • UC • UNSW @ ADFA <p>★ R&D Firms</p> <p>★ ACT Government</p> <p>★ Commonwealth Government</p> <p>★ Business and industry associations – see Stakeholders Appendix</p>	<p>★ Attracting and keeping high calibre R&D firms in Canberra to partner the emerging enterprise economy.</p> <p>★ Creating partnerships between education providers, researchers, business, industry and governments to facilitate the emerging enterprise economy.</p>



Focus Area Three – Environmental Sustainability – Environment/Energy/Sustainability/Climate Change

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Develop and promote the ACT as the national leader in sustainable technologies and practices, and Canberra as the 'solar capital'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Assist small and medium sized businesses to incorporate environmentally sustainable practices that will increase business profits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Government – Business and Industry Development ★ Small and medium-sized businesses in the ACT and region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Organise a Business in Focus Month (BIFM) forum for local businesses promoting take-up of renewable energy technologies and promoting innovative and cost effective approaches to waste management and recycling.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Global Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate development of an ACT Region Business Sustainability Learning Network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Develop a coordinated approach to encourage and facilitate green building technologies, design practices and operations in the ACT to reduce emissions and endorse the ACT as a national leader in sustainable technologies and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Showcase successful implementation of sustainable waste management practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ SERRROC ★ Gould League ★ ACT Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water ★ Queanbeyan City Council ★ Old Canberra Brickworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Support a case study to develop a Regional Sustainability Hub.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Develop a coordinated approach to encourage and facilitate green building technologies, design practices and operations in the ACT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Property Council ★ HIA ★ MBA ★ People with Disabilities ACT Inc. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Explore a regional approach to environmental challenges to achieve regional synergies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Coordinate ACT and surrounding Local Government Areas to collaboratively address adoption of environmentally sustainable practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Government ★ Capital Region Local Governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Open dialogue with the ACT Government and Capital Region Local Governments to progress this issue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Showcase the ACT and region's green energy facilities to promote education/engagement with alternative energy technologies, and encourage tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Capital Region Tourism ★ Australian Capital Tourism ★ National Capital Educational Tourism project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Investigate the feasibility of developing a Green Energy Trail that showcases green energy initiatives.

Focus Area Four – Health/Population Growth and Ageing

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Support people in the ACT and region to maintain their health and well being throughout their lifetime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate progress to create a supportive environment for carers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Carers ACT ★ ACT Health ★ ACT Department of Disability, Housing, and Community Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Promote increase of carer workforce participation by exploring the establishment of additional respite care services across the ACT.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Support people in the ACT and region to maintain their health and well being throughout their lifetime. ★ Continue to encourage people to age positively and to actively participate in their community as they get older. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Improve the health and well being of seniors with education, support services and promotion of healthy lifestyle choices to encourage them to maintain active and relatively independent lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Department of Disability, Housing, and Community Services ★ ACT Department of Education and Training ★ ACT Health ★ ACT Mental Health Foundation ★ ACT Office for Ageing ★ Canberra Institute of Technology ★ Ministerial Council of Ageing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate a network to progress options for the seniors to be able to actively participate in their community through recreational and community activities. Develop strategies to reduce social isolation and improve seniors' access to social networks; e.g. social hubs at libraries. ★ Explore facilitating uptake of e-health services, particularly for seniors. ★ Promote access to and participation in flexible employment options, and training and learning opportunities that will encourage continued participation of seniors in the workforce – paid employment and/or volunteer work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate access to high quality health services for ACT and region residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Progress projects to increase the number of GPs and nurses working in ACT health facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Health ★ Commonwealth Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Support progress of a new GP Super Clinic for the ACT that would include training facilities for GPs and nurses.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Assist ACT seniors to access appropriate and affordable housing through facilitating innovative accommodation choices and ensuring land releases, planning requirements, concession programs and public and community housing options support their needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACTPLA ★ ACT Government ★ Department of Disability, Housing, and Community Services ★ Property Council of Australia ★ Planning Institute of Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Explore the promotion of the construction of 'granny flats' in suburban areas to free large family homes for their intended capacity.



**Focus Area Four – Health/Population Growth and Ageing
(Continued)**

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Ensure an appropriate level of infrastructure and services supports population growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Encourage smart growth in the ACT that can accommodate an increasing population without impacting negatively on Canberrans' daily lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACTPLA ★ ACT Government ★ Business and Industry Development ★ Housing ACT ★ Property Council of Australia ★ Planning Institute of Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Encourage increased residential density in identified areas within Canberra.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in health outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Help to identify and meet the health needs of Indigenous families with appropriate program delivery that focuses on coordination and collaboration of services to provide a holistic outcome that has been deemed appropriate by the Indigenous community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Health ★ Department of Disability, Housing, and Community Services ★ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Coordination Group 	

Focus Area Five – Infrastructure/Telecommunications /Planning

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Support infrastructure and practices that underpin the ACT Government's commitment to achieving zero net greenhouse emissions for the ACT by 2060. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Identify choices that can be made when building new infrastructure that reflect the choice to minimise greenhouse gas emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Progress a stakeholders' network to document and implement ways to introduce environmental sustainable practices into local businesses – see Business. ★ Progress a range of transport initiatives that support having fewer cars travelling into Canberra.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate a strong dynamic ACT economy by supporting infrastructure projects that reflect the high standards of the nation's capital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide support to progress infrastructure planning projects that promote the ACT as a national business hub. ★ Facilitate and support provision of key infrastructure necessary to support economic development in the ACT and region and for the effective delivery of services – health, education, and transport. ★ Use infrastructure investment in technology to continue to increase the ACTs' productive capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Government ★ Commonwealth Government ★ NSW Government ★ VIC Government ★ QLD Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Support the plan to build an 'Australia Forum' – a new facility that meets international standards for major national and international events. ★ Refer to other focus areas for more information. ★ Support the roll out of the National Broadband Network throughout the ACT, with initial focus in the Gungahlin area.



Focus Area Six – Regional Development/Communities /Local Government

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Develop a sense of 'seamless border' between the ACT and its surrounding region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Establish links and partnerships with other regional stakeholders including neighbouring RDAs, all levels of government, and with business, industry, education and community groups. ★ Identify cross border issues that would benefit from the synergies of a cross-border approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Neighbouring RDAs e.g.RDA SI ★ ACT Government ★ NSW Government ★ Local Government Councils and Associations ★ Regional business, industry, education and community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Continue to develop a maintain a comprehensive regional stakeholder database. ★ Request stakeholder input into the Regional Plan 2010, and incorporate new information into the Regional Plan 2011. ★ Work closely with appropriate stakeholders to identify and progress projects of mutual interest and issues of concern, to identify gaps and reduce duplication of work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Progress RDA involvement in cross border communications and consultations on selected priority areas, e.g.transport infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Address regional transport issues, particularly those linking ACT and Queanbeyan, and facilitate progression of interests in this priority area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Government ★ Queanbeyan City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Lobby for RDA ACT's inclusion in the communications and consultations of the newly formed Eastern Regional Transport Taskforce. ★ Strengthen RDA ACT's role in the Regional Leaders Forum to help to develop the scope and facilitate the work of this forum.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Strengthen the ACT's suburban centres by encouraging engagement between local businesses and the local community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Government ★ ACT Community Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Revitalise existing suburban centres to encourage local use/engagement that will enhance community spirit and reduce vandalism.

Focus Area Six – Regional Development/Communities /Local Government (Continued)

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<p>★ Encourage an inclusive, holistic approach to regional development in the ACT and Capital Region.</p>	<p>★ Continue to encourage RDA ACT's inclusion in other regional groups and forums to holistically address regional issues.</p>	<p>★ NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet ★ NSW Department of Industry and Investment</p>	<p>★ Attend regional meetings and forums including the Regional Managers' Network (NSW Illawarra and South East Economic Development and Environment Cluster), and the South Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (SEROC).</p>
	<p>★ Assist in developing a collective voice for the ACT's community councils.</p>	<p>★ ACT Community Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belconnen Community Council • Gungahlin Community Council • North Canberra Community Council • Northside Community Service • Tuggeranong Community Council • Weston Creek Community Council • Woden Valley Community Council • Woden Community Service 	<p>★ Form an ACT Community Councils Group that would represent community councils and community groups, assisting to make strong and collective representation to governments and to share synergies of information and resources.</p>



Focus Area Seven – Social Inclusion/Housing

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Improve quality of life and well being for people living with a disability by facilitating access to housing, transport, employment, services and amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Coordinate the activities of government, employer groups, carer groups, community services, and the education and health care sectors, with particular focus on facilitating satisfactory housing, transport and employment options for people living with a disability and the ageing population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services ★ People with Disabilities ACT Inc ★ Employment Support Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Help to build partnerships between disabled people and employers to create long-term employment opportunities.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACTION ★ ACT Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Encourage ACTION to expand their disability functionality and services.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Housing ACT ★ ACTPLA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Explore options to facilitate the building of more housing designed to be appropriate for the disabled that will similarly accommodate the needs of the ageing population. ★ For example, explore the ability to implement requirements for the application of universal access designs in 20% of all new homes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Promote the establishment of affordable communal housing with appropriate regulation and safety measures. Design and build more housing designed to be accessible for the disabled and ageing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Housing ACT ★ ACT Fire Brigade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Assist to progress a guideline for the creation and operation of communal accommodation and disseminate information on communal accommodation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Develop innovative and sustainable cross portfolio solutions to meet the challenges faced by disadvantaged and aged people in the ACT and region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ACT Government Departments ★ Community Inclusion associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ For example, facilitate a working group on Sustaining Future Care in the ACT.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Close the gap between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Increase the participation rate of Indigenous youth in the Restorative Justice program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Restorative Justice Unit ★ Chief Minister's Department ★ ACT Police ★ Department of Justice and Community Safety ★ Department of Public Prosecutions ★ Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Request ACT Government funding support to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth to comply with Restorative Justice programs.

Focus Area Eight – Tourism/Arts, Culture & Heritage

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
★ Preserve, enhance and optimise the benefits of the ACT and region's cultural, heritage and tourism assets.	★ Promote the value of the ACT and region as a place of great natural beauty, gourmet produce, and as the home of nationally significant icons.	★ Local Governments of the Capital Region LGAs	★ Support development of walking/cycling regional tourism with a regional network of walking and cycling trails that begin and end in the ACT, joining points of common interest and sites of tourism/arts/heritage significance in the ACT and region.
		★ Tourism stakeholders including Australian Capital Tourism, Capital Region Tourism and Tourism NSW. ★ RDA Southern Inland	★ Assist in the production of a brochure to encourage trout fishing in the region
	★ Promote the ACT as a centre for excellence in sustainability, with particular focus on green energy production, waste management/ resource recovery and other sustainable management practices.	★ Old Canberra Brickworks ★ ACT Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water (DECCEW) ★ South East Resource Recovery Regional Organisation of Councils (SERRROC)/ Queanbeyan City Council ★ Tourism and environment stakeholders. ★ RDA Southern Inland	★ Facilitate development of a Regional Sustainability Hub – an educational attraction that showcases and promotes engagement with environmentally sustainable practices (refer CERES precedent). ★ Investigate the feasibility of developing a Green Energy Trail that showcases the ACT and region's green energy facilities and promotes engagement with renewable energy technologies.
★ Assist to define and promote ACT and region branding. Encourage regional branding of attractions, produce, and cultural and recreational pursuits.	★ Encourage regional tourism by developing and supporting initiatives that promote the ACT and region as a gourmet food and wine area.	★ ACT and region food and wine businesses and groups – Capital Region Food and Wine Cluster (prospective) ★ RDA Southern Inland	★ Work with local produce businesses to develop a Capital Region Food and Wine Cluster with synergies for product promotion, particularly in encouraging local retailers to stock local region products with low food miles.
		★ ACT Government ★ RDA Southern Inland ★ Small businesses involved in Poacher's Way.	★ Evaluate tourism project proposals, e.g. Poacher's Way.



Focus Area Nine – Transport

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
LOCAL			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate development of local, regional and national transport systems for the ACT and region that are sustainable, affordable and accessible. ★ Coordinate transport networks across all levels of government and with private transport providers and other stakeholders to provide integrated transport policies and programs to benefit the ACT and region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate implementation of transport options that will achieve a more sustainable transport system for the ACT that places less reliance on the private car and promotes a stronger role for public transport, walking and cycling. ★ Support projects that would provide major transport corridors across the ACT, making it easier to get in, out and across Canberra, and lightening the traffic load on Canberra's internal roads. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Explore the potential for ACT light rail/tram. ★ Facilitate discussions to progress development of dedicated public transport services between the ACT's major urban centres that could link up with terminuses for regional commuter services and with the Bike-n-Ride project. ★ Explore the potential for a bicycle use program whereby residents and tourists can access a bicycle from a variety of designated sites around the city, use it (hourly rate), then return it – international precedents in London, Paris, Barcelona and Vienna.
REGIONAL			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate development of local, regional and national transport systems for the ACT and region that are sustainable, affordable and accessible. ★ Coordinate transport networks across all levels of government and with private transport providers and other stakeholders to provide integrated transport policies and programs to benefit the ACT and region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate implementation of a regional transport network, supporting cross-jurisdictional and cross-sector planning activities addressing transport provision between the ACT and surrounding region. ★ Enhance accessibility into Canberra for those commuting in to work from the surrounding region, focussing particularly on the transport corridors linking Canberra with Queanbeyan, and the north-south corridor. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide support for the Major Road upgrade project (proposal to Infrastructure Australia) to improve the north-south transport corridor through the ACT, making it the primary road connection between the Federal and Monaro Highways. Such an upgrade would improve traffic flow during peak periods, help to form an adequate Canberra bypass for freight, and improve traffic flow on alternative routes such as Northbourne Avenue. ★ Establish links with the new Eastern Regional Transport Taskforce and other regional transport groups to look at ways to improve regional transport links, particularly between Canberra and Queanbeyan.

Focus Area Nine – Transport (Continued)

OBJECTIVES	PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	POTENTIAL INITIATIVES
REGIONAL (CONTINUED)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Support progress of efficient city by-pass mechanisms between the Barton, Federal, Kings and Monaro Highways (plus other relevant feeder routes) that will facilitate commuter, visitor and freight movements, provide greater scope for ACT and Queanbeyan transport initiatives, and reduce loads on ACT internal roads. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Develop a Canberra Regional Transport Plan/ Report in consultation with stakeholders from local, NSW, ACT and Commonwealth government agencies, including input from community, business and transport operators. Identify cross regional interdependencies and barriers to action. ★ Explore the potential to expand development of the proposed EPIC Park-n-Ride Centre (terminuses for regional commuter services) by providing additional centres at Canberra Airport and South Canberra to reduce commuter traffic into the city and major suburban centres.
NATIONAL			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Facilitate development of local, regional and national transport systems for the ACT and region that are sustainable, affordable and accessible. ★ Coordinate transport networks across all levels of government and with private transport providers and other stakeholders to provide integrated transport policies and programs to benefit the ACT and region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Support progression of a scoping study to examine the national project for a High Speed Rail route from Melbourne to Sydney via Canberra. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Co-ordinate the engagement of the Regional Development Australia network to provide support for the High Speed Rail project, particularly focussing on including the RDAs that represent the regions located along the proposed route.



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