



Chris Steel MLA

Minister for Transport and City Services

Minister for Skills

Special Minister of State

Member for Murrumbidgee

Mr Tom Duncan

Clerk

ACT Legislative Assembly

London Circuit

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter regarding petition 023-23, lodged by Ms Tara Cheyne MLA, on behalf of her constituent Mrs Heidi Prowse OAM, regarding improved public transport outcomes for Belconnen.

The ACT Transport Strategy 2020 outlines the ACT Government's vision for the transport system as one that "supports a compact, sustainable, and vibrant city". With the ACT Government committed to building a city shaping light rail network for Canberra, progressively building travel demand through high-quality and reliable bus services.

The ACT Government recognises the importance of expanding the Belconnen Transitway. The Belconnen to City Transitway is one of the busiest public transport corridors in Canberra. It services three very popular rapid bus routes, the R2, R3 and R4, as well as several local bus routes.

The ACT Government commissioned and released the Belconnen to City Transitway Stage 1 options report in 2011. The government implemented a large portion of the recommended bus priority measures, including dedicated bus lanes and bus jumps at intersections, which have improved travel times between Belconnen and the City. The upgrades were progressed on priority and were delivered over two stages in 2013 and 2014. The bus priority measures were located in the City (along Barry Drive) and in Belconnen adjacent to the University of Canberra and Radford College along College Street and part of Haydon Drive.

Some bus priority measures were not progressed at the time due to being deemed not yet necessary. These measures were predominantly located in the central section of the Transport corridor between Hayden Drive and Belconnen Way. The Government agrees that the time has come to revisit these measures.

ACT Legislative Assembly London Circuit, GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601



+61 2 6205 1470



steel@act.gov.au



@ChrisSteelMLA



chrissteellabor



chrissteelmla

It must be noted that the study and design that has informed the original options report back in 2011 are now out of date and require updating to reflect changes in the region, including population and traffic growth. For example, the bus priority recommendations in the 2011 report may no longer be sufficient and more significant interventions may now be required. Measures recommended in the options report, such as an intersection bus jump may now require a dedicated bus lane to achieve the desired transport outcomes. This is why we need to undertake detailed investigations first to ensure the bus priority measures we deliver achieve their intended outcome, which is what I put forward in my amendment to recent Assembly business on this matter.

An updated feasibility study is required to determine what remaining improvements can be made to the corridor to make material enhancements to bus travel times. The feasibility study would take into consideration new traffic modelling and the future development of housing, health, and tertiary education precincts in the region. In particular the analysis will take into consideration the future traffic impacts from the new North Canberra Public Hospital, precinct planning at the AIS, future expansion of Radford College and the University of Canberra. It would also consider Government's policy direction, such as the District Strategies, Planning Strategy, Transport Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, etc. These would need to be considered as part of eventual recommendations and options for further enhancements along the established corridor.

The Belconnen Transitway was the only ACT project listed on Infrastructure Australia's Infrastructure Priority List (Canberra public transport improvements). It was added in 2016 and identified as medium-term priority, with a 5-to-10-year timeframe. This initiative is at the IA Early Proposal stage, the next stage is Potential Investment Options. Undertaking an updated Feasibility Study, which focuses on the central section of the Belconnen Transitway corridor, will enable this initiative to progress. This will support the ACT to then seek co-funding from the Australian Government for this initiative in the future.

In addition to bus priority measures, an updated feasibility study would consider other opportunities to improve active travel infrastructure, improve connections between bus stops and key infrastructure and services, enhance other transport modes between Belconnen and the City, and preserve the corridor and support the future construction of Light Rail to Belconnen.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Transport and City Services