SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Canberran residents and visitors traverse the city on millions of trips daily for employment, education, social, recreational, and household activities. Commercial, government and community sector vehicles carry goods and provide many of the services that underpin life in the Territory.

Transport is the ACT's largest source of direct greenhouse gas emissions (more than 60%)[1], primarily through the use of petrol and diesel vehicles. To respond with appropriate urgency to the climate crisis, we must rapidly shift to a zero-carbon transport system through a range of strategies[2].

1 Point Advisory, 2022, ACT greenhouse gas inventory for 2021–22, https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/2122872/ACT-Greenhouse-Gas-Inventory-Report-2021-22.pdf

2 The Synthesis Report of the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6-SYR) released in March 2023 warns that emissions "will need to be cut by almost half by 2030, if warming is to be limited to 1.5°C."

Electric vehicles are already replacing fossil fuel vehicles — the ACT has the highest rate of EV uptake in Australia. Whilst privately owned EVs will continue to serve a role, other modes of transport are also beneficial for individuals, businesses, the natural environment and the city as well as the climate. These include active travel (walking, cycling, rolling), electrified public transport and ride-sharing. High-quality infrastructure and programs to support equitable access are essential to a successful zero-carbon transport system. Electrification and a mode shift towards greater use of active travel and public transport are urgently required.

1. Fund and implement an integrated transport strategy for Canberra that prioritises moving people safely, protects the environment, drives down emissions, and maintains liveability and equity of access.
2. Legislate targets for transport outcomes that meet or exceed emissions reduction targets, particularly a target that by 2035, 50% of commuting journeys will be by active and public transport[3].
3. Establish a Ministerial Advisory Council on Transport to advise the government and monitor the implementation of an integrated transport strategy.
4. By 2028, upgrade the existing network and build the missing links, as per Priority Two of the ACT Government's Active Travel Plan, to provide a connected, safe and convenient cycle and active travel network.

3 As per iMove Australia, 2022, FACTS: A framework for an Australian clean transport strategy, https://imoveaustralia.com/project/project-outcomes/facts-a-framework-for-an-australian-clean-transport-strategy

5. Legislate that from 2028 onwards at least 90% (at any time) of cycle lanes, shared paths and footpaths be maintained in good condition and are compliant with anti-discrimination laws. Allocate continuous funding to achieve this ongoing target.
6. Continue and expand the Slower Streets program and implement design changes (in consultation with local residents) that calm suburban streets to support safe active travel and recreation, particularly on streets without paths[4].
7. Fund, as advised by the Ministerial Advisory Council on Transport, community engagement programs that support people to make sustainable transport choices.
8. Offer incentives to purchase bicycles and scooters, both manual and electric, particularly to replace car ownership.
9. Deliver an integrated and electrified light rail and bus network that delivers a frequent and reliable seven-day service, enabling people to rely on public transport for work and personal travel. In particular, accelerate the construction of light rail.
10. Commit to all buses running on 100% renewable energy by 2035.

4 For instance, permanent pedestrian crossings around all schools and local shops, prioritised cycle lanes at all intersections, lower speed limits in busy areas.

11. Implement vehicle registration regulations to preference small, zero-emissions vehicles. From 2028:
    - Ensure that no fossil fuel vehicles will be newly registered.
    - Ensure that no "highly polluting" vehicles that are *already* registered will be re-registered, using a criterion to be determined and progressively strengthened by the Ministerial Advisory Council on Transport, with the target of no fossil fuel vehicle registrations after 2035.[5]
    - Implement and progressively strengthen a formula basing registration fees on a combination of vehicle emissions and vehicle weight.
    - Invest in emissions testing equipment and enforce vehicle emissions standards.
    - Consider a scheme to incentivise reducing the number of vehicles registered per household.

12. (a) Require new multi-unit buildings to be constructed with EV charging by 2025. (b) Require the installation of EV charging infrastructure in all existing residential apartments by 2028. Provide advice and financial assistance for owners corporations to enable this.
13. Ensure public charging infrastructure contractual agreements mandate a defined level of charger reliability, and provision for accessibility for drivers with disabilities.
14. By 2025, audit all vehicle policies and fees for equity impacts, and implement programs to empower low-income households to replace fossil fuel vehicles[15], including incentivising other modes of transport.

5 Hardman, S, et al, 2021, A perspective on equity in the transition to electric vehicles, MIT Science Policy Review, https://sciencepolicyreview.org/2021/08/equity-transition-electric-vehicles/ and Greenlining, Electric vehicles for all: an equity toolkit, https://greenlining.org/electric-vehicles-toolkit/