# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY** ................................................................. 3
Methodology ........................................................................................................... 3
  - Questionnaire design ......................................................................................... 3
  - Data collection .................................................................................................. 3
  - Sample Design ................................................................................................. 3
Data Processing and Analysis .................................................................................. 4
**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS** ........................................................................ 5
**FUTURE CHALLENGES** ..................................................................................... 7
**BRAND/COMMUNICATIONS** ............................................................................. 8
**CONSULTATION/CHANNELS** ............................................................................ 11
**BENEFITS** ........................................................................................................ 13
**MESSAGES** ....................................................................................................... 19
**USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT** .......................................................................... 21
**CONCEPTUAL OPTION** .................................................................................... 24
**INFLUENCERS / SUBJECTIVE NORMS** ......................................................... 24
**SUPPORT** .......................................................................................................... 25
**DEMOGRAPHICS** ............................................................................................. 30
BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The ACT Government Capital Metro Agency is in the process of planning and improving community communication and consultation strategies regarding the Capital Metro light rail system. Piazza Research (a local quality certified market and social research firm) was selected to conduct community research to inform and support the communication activities of the Capital Metro Agency.

The research involved a two-stage process including focus groups of various demographic categories across Canberra and a quantitative telephone survey of residents. Many issues were explored including understanding the views of Canberra residents regarding future challenges for Canberra, the level of awareness and support for the Capital metro project, as well as the community’s perceptions of the project’s benefits and their concerns.

This report shows the findings of the quantitative telephone survey of Canberra residents conducted in June 2014.

Methodology

A telephone survey of Canberra residents was conducted as this method provided results which were most representative of the ACT population overall.

Questionnaire design

The survey questions were developed using insights gained from the Stage 1 focus groups, input from the Capital Metro Agency management team and input from Piazza Research project consultants. The survey was designed to be succinct to minimise respondent burden and could be administered by telephone in 8 to 11 minutes. Most questions were ‘closed’ (or tick-box) format. Lists of issues presented (when asking for importance ratings from the community) were asked in randomised order to prevent any question order bias in results.

Data collection

Data collection was conducted between the 10th and 24th June 2014 by trained research interviewers. A Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system was used and quality control checks were conducted by data collection team supervisors.

Sample Design

List assisted random digit dialling was used to achieve a random sample of adult residents across the ACT.

A total of 1,192 responses were achieved. For the 95% confidence interval, overall results to this survey are calculated to be accurate to within +/- 2.9% margin of error.

Quality Assurance System – This project complies with the ISO 20252 Market, Opinion and Social Research Standard.
Data Processing and Analysis

Piazza Research used its own statistical software, ‘Q’, and Excel to analyse survey results. Software validation and post data-entry checks were conducted to ensure data integrity before analysis.

A descriptive analysis was performed producing graphs, tables and frequency counts.

**Rounding error** – Percentage results have been rounded to the nearest whole per cent. Percentages in some graphs may total slightly more or less than 100%.
SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

- **Level of public support** – The majority (55%) of Canberra residents support the ACT Government plans to develop the Capital Metro light rail system for Canberra; 34% do not and 11% are undecided. Of the 34% who do not support the project, the cost of the system for the perceived benefits gained was the main reason for withholding support (52%), followed by their belief that there are alternative ways to improve public transport (e.g. improve bus services). Overall, the older people are the less likely they are to support the Capital Metro, although the majority across all age groups (apart from those aged 65 and above) are supportive. One-parent households with dependent children and couples with dependent children and are more supportive (70% and 65%) than those living in other household arrangements. Males are a little more likely to support the Capital Metro project (59%) than females (51%).

- **Perceived future challenges** – For the Canberra community, the three most important future challenges for Government to take action to address were; improving the healthcare system and hospitals, creating more local jobs and improving public education. Improving public transport was equal fourth-most important (with housing affordability).

- **Awareness of the Capital Metro brand** – 80% of respondents did not know the Capital Metro brand.

- **Awareness of the light rail concept** - 96% were aware of what light rail was and most residents (86%) believed they knew the proposed route of the light rail project.

- **Community perceptions about Government motivation for light rail investment** – Just over half of Canberra residents believe that the ACT Government is investing in light rail to upgrade and improve transport options and to reduce traffic congestion (53%). 10% believe the decision to pursue light rail is for political reasons only. Those who do not support the project are substantially more likely than supporters to be unsure of the Government’s reason for investing in light rail, or believe that the decision to invest is based on political reasons.

- **Useful communication / consultation channels** - Television and radio, community newspapers and magazines, establishing an interactive website where residents can leave their comments and ideas for Government, and providing information with energy bills were considered the four most useful communication channels. Social media was not considered very useful by respondents for communicating information about the Capital Metro. A breakdown by non-supporters of the project shows they consider all communication channels to be less useful than supporters.

- **Perceived benefits of the Capital Metro** – The majority of residents (51% to 69%) believed most of the potential benefits presented to them about the Capital Metro were real benefits. These included the benefits of; a more effective and reliable public transport system through integrating with ACTION Busses, an upgraded Northbourne Avenue, boosting the local economy and creating jobs and encouraging investment, and reducing car dependency. It is notable that there were substantial proportions who disagreed that these were real benefits (22% to 37%). Aspects less likely to be considered real benefits included; helping the city grow in a more compact and sustainable way, and that light rail will support a shift towards a healthier lifestyle.
breakdown of results shows that non-supporters of the project are substantially less likely to agree that there are any benefits to the Capital Metro project.

- **Community concerns** – The cost of the system for the perceived benefits gained was by far the most common concern for the Canberra community (54%). The limited route of the Capital Metro was the second most common concern (12%). Non-supporters are substantially more likely (71%) than supporters (44%) to be concerned about the cost and affordability of the project.

- **Northbourne Avenue Trees** – Most residents support the approach of replacing the current trees with new and longer lasting trees during the Capital Metro construction phase (69%); 22% do not and 9% are uncertain. A breakdown of results by supporters and non-supporters of the Capital metro shows non-supporters are less likely to support the approach to Northbourne Avenue trees (39%) compared to supporters (87%).

- **Most appealing communication messages** – ‘Supporting jobs’, ‘An environmentally friendly transport system’, and ‘A better public transport system’ were the three most appealing messages to the community regarding the Capital Metro. Non-supporters and supporters had similar overall preferences for key messages.

- **Current use of public transport** – 83% of residents drive to commute and travel around Canberra; 11% use public busses. The majority (57%) believed they would be more likely to use public transport if it involved a light rail system which was accessible to them. A strong trend is evident showing that the older people are, the less likely they are to report being encouraged to use public transport if it involved an accessible light rail system. Overall, the majority of all age groups (other than those aged 65 and above) would be more likely to use public transport if it included light rail. The majority of all household types agreed overall, while couples with dependent children and group households without children are more likely than the other household types to be encouraged to use public transport if light rail was involved. The majority of residents in most Canberra suburbs report being more likely to use public transport if it involved an accessible light rail system. Suburbs having a majority of residents who are unsure or report they would not be more likely to use public transport if it involved a light rail system were mostly south of State Circle or near the industrial zone of Fyshwick.

- **Influencers** – The highest proportion (46%) of residents believed their family and friends supported a new light rail system for Canberra. A substantial proportion (31%) did not.
Q1. I’m going to read out a list of challenges that Canberra as a city might face in the future. On a scale of 0 = not at all important to 10 = extremely important; Can you please tell me how important it is for the ACT government to take action to address each challenge?

The Canberra community believed that most of the issues presented were at least somewhat important for the ACT Government to take improvement action on. In order of highest average importance score, the three most important future issues to respondents were; improving the healthcare system and hospitals, creating more local jobs and improving public education. Improving public transport was equal fourth-most important (with housing affordability) on a list of 11 future challenges presented.
BRAND/COMMUNICATIONS

Q2. Do you know what light rail is?

Almost all respondents (96%) knew what light-rail was; only 4% did not.

Q3. Can you tell me what the name of the light rail project is?

Eighty percent (80%) of respondents did not know the correct name for the Capital Metro or answered incorrectly; 20% knew the project’s name.
Q4. Do you know where the light rail is going?

![Bar chart showing the distribution of responses to Q4.](chart)

Most survey respondents believed they knew the proposed route of the Capital Metro (86%); 15% did not or were unsure.

Q5. Why do you think the Government is investing in light rail?

![Bar chart showing the distribution of responses to Q5.](chart)

Overall 53% of Canberran’s believe the Government is investing in light rail to upgrade and improve transport options (32%) or to reduce traffic congestions (21%). Fifteen percent (13%) are unsure why and 10% consider the project is primarily for political reasons (commonly mentioning the Government’s association with the Greens).
A breakdown of this question shows a clear difference between those who support light rail and those who do not. Non-supporters have a high proportion that were unsure about why the Government was investing in light rail (21%) and a relatively high proportion who believed that the decision to invest in light rail was based on political reasons (20%). In contrast, supporters are much more likely to believe that the Government’s motivation to invest in light rail is to upgrade and improve transport options (40%) and to reduce road traffic congestion (27%).
Q6. I’m going to read out a list of different ways the ACT Government could communicate with you about the Capital Metro. On a scale of 0 = not at all useful to 10 = extremely useful, can you tell me how useful each of these ways would be to communicate information to you.

Television and radio, community newspapers and magazines, establishing an interactive website whereCanberrans can leave their comments and ideas for Government, and providing information with energy bills were considered the four most useful communication channels.

Social media, billboards in public locations and the Capital Metro website were considered the three least useful communication channels by respondents.
Q6. Breakdown by supporters and non-supporters

Non-supporters generally viewed all communication channels for communicating information regarding the Capital Metro as less useful than supporters.
BENEFITS

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree about whether they believed a list of potential benefits of the Capital Metro were real.

Q7. A more effective and reliable public transport system through integration with ACTION buses.

\[ n = 1192, \text{ base } = 1191 \]

Sixty-two percent (63%) of respondents agreed the Capital Metro would provide a more effective and reliable public transport system; a quarter 25% disagreed.

Q8. Light rail will help to upgrade and uplift Northbourne Avenue

\[ n = 1192, \text{ base } = 1188 \]

The majority (51%) believed light-rail would help to upgrade and uplift Northbourne Avenue, although a substantial proportion disagree (37%).
Q9. The building of a light rail system in Canberra will boost the local economy by creating thousands of jobs and encouraging investment.

Fifty-three percent (52%) of respondents think building a light rail system will create jobs and boost the local economy; 33% disagree.

Q10. Light rail will support a reduction in car dependency

Most Canberran’s (51%) believe light-rail will reduce car dependency however 37% disagree.
Q11. Light rail will help the city to grow in a more compact and sustainable way.

While the largest proportion (47%) of respondents think light rail will help the city to grow sustainably, a similar (slightly smaller proportion) disagree (40%).

Q12. Light rail will support a shift towards a healthier lifestyle, i.e. people walking to and from the stops.

Most people (46%) disagreed that light rail would support a shift towards a healthier lifestyle; (38%) agreed.
Q13. What aspect of the light rail project is of concern for you? (open-ended question)

The cost and affordability of the system was by far the most common concern about a light rail system, with more than half of respondents (54%) identifying this as a concern. Limited availability of the route to the current corridor was the next most commonly cited project concern (12%). There are also 15% of people who have no concern.
Q13. Breakdown by supporters and non-supporters

Non-supporters are substantially more likely (71%) than supporters (44%) to be concerned about the cost and affordability of the project. Supporters’ second-most common concern was the restricted route options for the Capital Metro.
Q14. The current trees along Northbourne Avenue are reducing in number due to poor health and weather impact. Building light rail along Northbourne Ave may mean replacing the current trees with new and longer lasting trees. Do you support this approach?

Seventy percent (69%) of Canberran’s support replacing the current trees along Northbourne Avenue with longer lasting trees as part of the light rail construction. Twenty one per cent (22%) do not support this approach.

Breakdown by supporters and non-supporters (Q8 to Q12 and Q14): Perceived benefits of light rail

Non-supporters are much less likely to see any benefits of having a light rail system in Canberra.
MESSAGES

Q15. On a scale of 0 = not at all appealing to 10 = extremely appealing, can you tell me how appealing each of these messages about the Capital Metro is to you.

Of the messages tested, those considered most appealing were: ‘Supporting jobs’, ‘An environmentally friendly transport system’, and ‘A better public transport system’.
Q15. **Breakdown by supporters and non-supporters**

Non-supporters were substantially negative about any of the proposed messages regarding the Capital Metro. In relative terms though, the three messages most important to this group were ‘A better public transport system’, ‘An environmentally friendly transport system’, and ‘Supporting Jobs’.
USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Q16. How would you mostly get to work (or travel around Canberra if you don't work)?

- **Walk**
- **Cycle**
- **Drive**
- **Take a bus**
- **Take a taxi**

Eighty-five percent (83%) of people drive to travel around Canberra; 11% take buses.

Q17. Would you be more likely to use public transport if it involved a light rail system within easy walking distance or was accessible via other means?

**Overall**

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Unsure**

The majority (57%) of respondents believe they would be more likely to use public transport if it involved a light rail system within easy walking distance or was accessible via other means. A substantial proportion though (34%) did not believe this would make them more likely to use public transport.
A strong trend is evident showing that the older people were, the less likely they were to report they would be encouraged to use public transport if it involved an accessible light rail system. Overall though, the majority of all age groups (other than those aged 65 and above) would be more likely to use public transport if it included light rail.

Couples with dependent children and group households without children were more likely than other household types to be encouraged to use public transport if light rail was involved, but the majority of all household types agree overall.
Q17. Thematic map of postcodes of suburbs where the majority of residents would be more likely to use public transport if it involved an accessible light rail system.

The majority of residents in most Canberra suburbs report being more likely to use public transport if it involved an accessible light rail system. Suburbs having a majority of residents who are unsure or report they would not be more likely to use public transport were mostly south of State Circle or near the industrial zone of Fyshwick.
CONCEPTUAL OPTION

Q18. Would you support extra money being spent on a light rail system rather than buses if you knew there would be more long-term benefits for Canberra e.g. cleaner environment, better access and more jobs and investment?

Overall

- Spend on Busses: 38%
- Spend on Light Rail: 48%
- Unsure: 14%

Assuming a light rail system would provide more long-term benefits for Canberra, 48% of respondents supported spending extra money on the light-rail system. A large proportion (although smaller) supported spending on buses rather than light rail (38%).

INFLUENCERS / SUBJECTIVE NORMS

Q19. Do you think your family and friends would want a new light rail system for Canberra?

Overall

- Yes: 46%
- No: 31%
- Unsure: 23%

The highest proportion (46%) of respondents believed their family and friends would want a new light-rail system for Canberra, although 31% do not. Just over a fifth (21%) were unsure about their friends’ and families’ views.
**Q19 Breakdown: by Age**

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

*n = 1192, base = 1182*

Those under 30 years of age are more likely to believe that their friends and family would want a new light rail system for Canberra, while people aged 65 and over are least likely to believe this.

**SUPPORT**

**Q20. Do you support the ACT Government plans to develop the Capital Metro light rail system for Canberra?**

**Overall**

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

*n = 1192, base = 1191*

The majority (55%) of Canberra residents support the ACT Government plans to develop the Capital Metro light rail system for Canberra; 34% do not and 11% are undecided.
**Q20 Breakdown: by Age**

- **Under 30**: 77% Yes, 16% No, 8% Unsure
- **30 to 45**: 57% Yes, 31% No, 12% Unsure
- **46 to 64**: 54% Yes, 36% No, 10% Unsure
- **65 and above**: 43% Yes, 46% No, 11% Unsure

*n = 1192, base = 1184*

**Q20 Breakdown: by Household**

- **A group household without children**: 59% Yes, 19% No, 22% Unsure
- **One-person household without children**: 52% Yes, 33% No, 15% Unsure
- **One parent household with dependant children**: 70% Yes, 18% No, 12% Unsure
- **A couple with dependant children**: 65% Yes, 23% No, 11% Unsure
- **An adult couple only**: 49% Yes, 43% No, 8% Unsure

*n = 1192, base = 1168*
Males are a little more likely to support the Capital Metro project (59%) than females (51%).
Q20. Thematic map of postcodes of support for the Capital Metro project

In terms of overall support for the project, the majority of residents from most postcodes across Canberra support the Capital Metro project (green colour). The suburbs in blue represent suburbs where the level of support is the same as the level of non-support (to within 5%) or the suburb has a majority of residents who are unsure. The few suburbs showing a majority of non-supporting residents (red) are within the inner-south or south of Canberra. Areas without sufficient data are not marked on the map.
Reasons for not supporting the project; why do you say NO?

A breakdown of those who do not support light rail shows the main reason for them not supporting it is a perception that the cost of the system might not outweigh the benefits provided (52%). A belief that there are alternative options which might be less expensive (e.g. improving existing bus services) is the second most commonly held belief (16%) for the non-supporter group.
DEMOGRAPHICS

Q21. In what year were you born?

- Under 30: 6%
- 30 to 45: 41%
- 46 to 64: 37%
- 65 and above: 16%

\( n = 1192, \text{ base } = 1185 \)

Q22. What is your highest level of education you have achieved so far?

- Primary Education (Year 1 to year 6): 0%
- Secondary Education (Year 7 - 12): 20%
- Certificate level / Technical / Trade / TAFE / CIT: 10%
- Advanced diploma and diploma level: 16%
- University Level Education (Bachelor and higher): 53%

\( n = 1192, \text{ base } = 1189 \)
Q23. Would you describe this household as?

- An adult couple only: 44%
- A couple with dependant children: 34%
- One parent household with dependant children: 4%
- One-person household without children: 13%
- A group household without children: 4%

n = 1192, base = 1169

Q24. Gender (record)

- Male: 56%
- Female: 44%

n = 1192, base = 1190
Q25. What is your postcode?

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n = 1192, base = 1192

Data sample sizes that are significantly less than 30 are considered insufficient to represent the group, and are marked as Red, which were not taken into account in the demographic breakdowns.

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