

## Public Transport in the Federal Capital Territory in the 1920s & 1930s.

Construction work on the city of Canberra began in earnest in 1913. The nearest town was Queanbeyan and from 1916 a Co-operative Store was in operation near the Kingston Railway Station. The rail line between Queanbeyan and Canberra opened in 1914 and from this time some passenger travel for workmen was available. However the majority of people if they wished to visit the shopping centre at Queanbeyan had the choice of shank's pony (walking), push bike, horse & sulky, horse, or motorized vehicle. One enterprising man at Duntroon hired out horse and sulkies and Mrs Marion Stanley of the Engineers Mess in 1919 availed herself of this mode of transport. Her young daughter Cecilia walked across on Friday afternoons to Duntroon from the Mess (near the Power House in Kingston), picked up the horse and buggy and drove home. On the following Sunday repeated the process in reverse order.

Anyone wanting to catch the train to Melbourne had to organise transport across to Yass and those wanting to go to Sydney had to join the train at Queanbeyan. The train journey between Queanbeyan and Canberra required another engine to be used and this practice continued as late as the 1950s and 1960s. The wait for another engine often added a few hours to the journey. A number of taxi owner drivers in the 1920s and 1930s advertised their services for runs to Yass and Queanbeyan Railway Stations.

From 1921 some transport was supplied to a few officials and foremen but the majority still had to find their own way to and from work or shopping. Jeremiah Dillon, Foreman of the Sewer Works is well remembered travelling around the sites using a horse and sulky. Horses were still in use in the post World War 2 era and one document in Australian Archives in the 1930s refers to the need to put in rails for horses to be tethered - at Kingston Shopping Centre.

In 1925 Mrs Barton started a coach run to and from Queanbeyan. The authorities also supplied a char-a-banc for limited public transport. In late 1926 the Federal Capital Commission decided to start a public service using a second hand omnibus bought in Sydney and repainted in basic cream with a maroon trim and logo.

The introduction of the new FCT Omnibus service was recorded in the 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1926 issue of The Federal Capital Pioneer, Canberra's first newspaper. In this article Mr Butters, the First Commissioner stated: *To meet the increasing demand for passenger transport a Motor Bus Service between settlements has recently been inaugurated and will be augmented on the arrival of four buses recently purchased by the Commission...*

On the 23rd August 1926 tenders were called to establish a bus service in the territory. A number of people applied but in the end there was only one taker and he in turn pulled out when he could not raise the finance necessary. Hence the first attempt to privatize the new bus service in the ACT failed. (NB From documentation found in the Australian Archives it appears that these negotiations continued into 1927.)

The following year the FCC enlarged the bus fleet from seven to eleven. The four new BEAN buses purchased for a cost of two thousand eight hundred and five pounds came from Dalgety & Company 163 William Street Sydney and were delivered in January 1928. They became buses numbers 8,9,10 & 11.

At this time a logo was chosen for the buses. It was confined within a circle in which the words *Federal Capital* followed the top section of the circle and *Commission* was placed in a straight horizontal line across the centre of the circle. The lettering was one inch high in Naples Buff on a background of Canadian Maroon.

Each bus had a two man crew - the driver and his conductor. During the period of World War 2 a number of women bus conductors took up duties. They included Isa McPhetters, Jean Williams (her married

surname) and Queanie Carpenter. Women wore similar uniforms to the men. It consisted of grey trousers and top with a white dust coat and brimmed hat with the Commonwealth crest.<sup>1</sup>

From 1936 until 1951 half cabin (driver) buses were used and the terminals were at Kingston near the Power House and another near Corroboree Park in Ainslie. A bundee for clocking on and off was at Acton.

Below: Mrs Barton's Safety Coach at Hotel Canberra. The sailors in the coach were from the HMAS Renown - the ship that brought the royal couple, Duke and Duchess of York to Australia to open Parliament on 9th May, 1927. Mrs Barton ran a tourist run from the Hotel Canberra and lived there for a short time. By 1928 she have moved into rooms in the Hotel Acton. The Hotel Canberra had its own garage behind the Hotel. It was known as *Hunt's Garage*.



In 1926 there were two public bus routes in Canberra - one to the north side of the Molonglo river and the other to the south. Although there was a timetable it was a standing joke that that it appeared to be wishful thinking. The service provided lunch time service to public servants who wished to go home to eg Hotel Ainslie (1925-1927 – In 1927 the name was changed to Gorman House). Temporary workmen's settlements with the exception of the Causeway were not served with the exception of a school bus to Westridge and a twice weekly service for adults. Westlake, Russell Hill, Molonglo and Oaks Estate people had to walk or travel by private transport. Westlake did have a bus shed on State Circle, but as it was about a mile away from the nearest house it was a fair distance to walk to wait for a bus. The alternative bus stop was at Hotel Canberra - again quite a distance from the houses.

Westridge people walked to the Prime Minister's Lodge to catch their bus except for the few times it came into their settlement. Russell Hill people had to walk to the bus stop St John the Baptist Church. The settlement was close to the site of the modern Campbell Shops.

The four new buses acquired in 1928 were plagued with problems. They had a number of bad design faults and mechanical faults. The Australian Archives files on Transport contain detailed documents on these problems which ranged from the availability or rather non availability of a replacement clip to enable the back window to be opened to replacement chassis for each bus. All the parts had to be ordered from

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the women who worked on the buses and their uniforms comes from K Carnall of Ainslie.

England and transported here by ship and rail. This meant constant delays. New buses ordered were from different companies with the result that parts were not interchangeable.

One of the old Canberra buses has been kept. It is the 1949 AEC Regal Omnibus. Its number C59351 and a brochure put out by *Action* in 1988 has the following information about it. It is Chassis type AEC Regal Mark III and has an AEC six cylinder engine 7.7 litre vertical diesel developing 95 bhp at 1800 rpm. The Transmission is 4 speed crash; wheelbase 17ft 6 inches; overall length 27 ft 6 inches; width 8 ft and had a seating capacity of 39. It has the half cabin driving section and it was one of 55 buses in use at that time. The description of the colours of the bus are Biscuit Fawn with canary yellow band trimmed in red. These were the fleet's colours between 1931 and 1965. Ironically the Department of the Interior adopted this livery after buying two Commer buses from the General Bus Company at Parramatta. The Department apparently preferred the General Bus Company colours to its own, maroon and buff, and for the next 34 years all Canberra buses were painted in a fawn which later became known as *Canberra Fawn* or *Canberra Sand*.

By the time the Regal entered the service in 1949 the Canberra Bus Service employed an unusual route coding system on the front of the bus hence the two small boxes side by side. The destination was shown only on the side of the bus (both sides too!). The basic Kingston to Ainslie via Civic route had five letters to be used for the northside (north of the Molonglo River) variations and seven numbers for southside variations.

- Route 1 Kingston\*, Manuka, Forrest, Deakin, State Circle
- 2 Kingston\*, Manuka, Forrest, National Circuit, Barton
- 3 Kingston, Griffith, Manuka, Forrest, National Circuit, Barton
- 4 Kingston\*, Griffith, Manuka, Forrest, Deakin, State Circle
- 5 Kingston\*, Griffith, Manuka, Barton
- 6 Kingston\*, Manuka, Barton
- 7 Wentworth Avenue\*

\*infrequent services to and from Narrabundah

- Route A Acton
- B Commonwealth Bridge
- F Farrer Street Braddon
- R Euree Street Reid
- T Turner

Known letter combinations were AF, AR, AT, ATR, B, BF, BR, BT. Thus a bus showing 2AR on the front and Ainslie on the sides travelled from Kingston to Ainslie via route 2 (Manuka, Forrest, National Circuit, Barton), Acton and Euree Street Reid to Ainslie.

NB Friday night shopping was introduced in the 1920s and was stopped in the early years of World War 2 when blackouts and restrictions such as petrol rationing made it difficult to continue. Some buses were provided to transport people to shopping centres such as Kingston that was the main one. Molonglo residents however had a bus in but not home.

## SELECTED DOCUMENTS ON GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT

An official report from the Transport Section 1925 written by the Transport Officer, A Baxter is as follows:  
*To the Controller of Stores*

*Upon appointment as Transport Officer on April 1st, I took steps as indicated to consolidate the whole of the Transport Plant, hitherto sectionally controlled and consisting of the following units: -*

<i>Motor Section Passenger</i>	
<i>Ford cars, single seater</i>	3
<i>Ford cars, five seater</i>	11
<i>Dodge cars, five seater</i>	2
<i>Talbot car, five seater</i>	1
<i>Armstrong Siddeley 5 seater 6 cylinder</i>	1
<i>Dodge Graham charabanc 25 passengers</i>	1
<i>Motor Section, Public Service</i>	
<i>Hotchkiss fire engine 4 cylinder</i>	1
<i>Ambulance, Ford</i>	1
<i>Motor Bicycle, Police</i>	1
<i>Motor Section, Goods Transport</i>	
<i>Dodge Graham lorries 30 cwt</i>	1
<i>Ford, lorries 1 ton</i>	3
<i>Ford, trucks 7cwt</i>	4
<i>Motor Section, Field Service</i>	
<i>Fordson tractors</i>	2
	<i>Total 33 motor vehicles</i>
<i>Horse Transport Section</i>	
<i>Lorries, 2 ton</i>	3
<i>Drays, 1 ton</i>	1
<i>Wagonette</i>	1
<i>Sulkies</i>	5
<i>Horses</i>	12
<i>Steam Section</i>	
<i>Traction engines</i>	<i>6 together with rolling stock</i>
<i>Locomotives</i>	<i>3 together with rolling stock</i>
<i>Sentinel Steam Waggon</i>	1
<i>Bicycles, Push</i>	
<i>Water trailers</i>	
<i>Water cart road sprayer</i>	

*An inspection of the plant was made in conjunction with the Mechanical Engineer, and recommendations were submitted for the disposal of certain units which it was considered had passed their useful and economical life. During the period under review the following additional plant has been approved and purchased:*

<i>Ford cars, 5 seater</i>	3
<i>Dodge-Graham lorries 30ccwt</i>	2
<i>Armstrong Siddeley 5 seater 4 cylinder</i>	1
<i>Morris Cowley 4 seater</i>	1
<i>Fowler Traction engines</i>	2
<i>Cletrac tractors</i>	2

*In addition to the above vehicles have been asked for to enable the Branch to satisfactorily carry out the services required of it.*

*Passenger Service - An exceptionally heavy time was experienced during the first two months and heavy strain was placed on the few vehicles at my disposal, the Branch being hard pressed to meet the demands placed upon it, but the situation has now been somewhat relieved.*

*The buses at my command have been unable to carry out all the services that may have been required of them, but an additional bus is now on order and should be delivered in about six weeks. During the first two months whilst the weather was fine, week-end trips for the staff were arranged and well patronized, and it is intended to continue with these with the advent of brighter weather. The service for school pupils and the conveyance of officers to and from the various centres to their offices has so increased that an additional bus can be comfortably employed; a service from Acton to Hotel Ainslie [Gorman House] at mid-day has recently been introduced and is loaded to full capacity, the charge for a weekly ticket being 1s 6d.*

*Buses are frequently hired to the Staff for sports meetings and occasionally in connection with touring parties from the hotels, payable rates, but in line with the Commission's instructions. In no case any attempt made to compete with private enterprise... these matters.*

*During the last three months ending 23rd June, passenger vehicles covered a total of 38,811 miles. With few exceptions, requisitions for passenger services have been promptly met, and every endeavour has been made to give satisfaction and to conduct the Branch on lines of efficiency and economy. I should point out the urgent need for a new garage and workshops for both repairs and painting as until these facilities are afforded the vehicles cannot be kept in good condition.*

*With the present plant a paint shop will be kept busy all the year. All vehicles have been registered to comply with the New South Wales Traffic Regulations.*

*The matter of overtime which at the commencement was very heavy in the passenger section and was being paid for at time t half rates has been appreciably reduced by the adoption of afternoon and night shifts, and by this means the greasing and cleaning vehicles which hitherto took up the running time during the day, is now done after the vehicles have finished the day's work there allowing the vehicles to run full 48 hours without in any way impairing their efficiency; this applies to goods as well as passengers.*

*Goods Transport - The activities of this section have also greatly increased since taking over, and the future building program will necessitate still further provision being made to cope with the work in view. Contract vehicles are at present employed on brick cartage to jobs not served by the light railway and for the present it is not proposed to alter the system. [Light rail was used to carry bricks from the Brickyards to Parliament house, Civic and the Power House.]*

*Light Railway One locomotive is kept fully employed at present, but with the line to Civic Centre repaired there will be ample work available to place a second locomotive in commission and this is available when required.*

*Traction Engines - The two new Fowler engines have proved satisfactory. It is proposed to handle the output from the qua.. with more mobile transport at soon as the new road is open to traffic, and a report on this subject is being submitted. The approximate mileage run by goods transport for the three months was 19,216 miles. The total mileage run by motor vehicles for the period was 58,194 miles and the earnings in this section were 3,516 pounds 16 shillings and 6 pence whilst the total earnings for the transport plant a whole were approximately 5,000 pounds.*

*It is anticipated that the next three months will show an appreciable increase in all sections of the Branch.*

*THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
ENDING 30TH JUNE, 1927 REPORT OF TRANSPORT SECTION  
YEAR ENDING 30TH JUNE, 1927*

*To the Chief Engineer,*

*In submitting the third annual report on transport activities the following data will show the expansion of this section in common with the general activities of the Commission.*

*The following motor vehicles are at the present time in commission and controlled by this section:-*

<i>Cars -</i>		
<i>Armstrong-Siddeley</i>	<i>15</i>	
<i>Crossley</i>	<i>3</i>	
<i>Morris-Cowley</i>	<i>5</i>	
<i>Ford</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>Total 40</i>

<i>Trucks -</i>		
<i>Thornycroft</i>	<i>6</i>	
<i>Dodge, 30cwt</i>	<i>3</i>	
<i>Ford, 1 ton</i>	<i>4</i>	
<i>Ford, 10 cwt</i>	<i>4</i>	
<i>Ford Van</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Total 18</i>

<i>Buses</i>		
<i>AEC (29 passenger)</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Total 5</i>

<i>Miscellaneous -</i>		
<i>Ambulance</i>	<i>1</i>	
<i>Fire Engine</i>	<i>1</i>	
<i>Motor Cycles</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Total 6</i>

<i>Chara-a-bancs</i>		
<i>Dodge</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Total 2</i>

*Total 71*

*In addition to the above we control under contract an average of 100 motor lorries engaged on gravel &c, cartage to the various field jobs.*

*Several vehicles having passed their economic life have been disposed of and replaced where necessary.*

*PASSENGER CARS*

*The total mileage run by passenger vehicles, excluding omnibuses, during the period was 319,765 miles with a revenue of 42,311 pounds, 16 shillings and 8 pence recoverable from various works and Departments for services rendered.*

*OMNIBUS SERVICE*

*The City Omnibus Service has been in operation since August last. Commencing with four buses, the increasing traffic necessitated the purchase of an additional bus which was placed in commission in December 1926.*

*During the period August 1926, to June 30th 1927, 245,953 passengers were carried and 85,822 miles run on the regular bus routes giving a revenue of 6,015 pounds. The omnibuses were used exclusively for the*

transport of Commonwealth Guests on the occasion of the visit to Canberra of Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of York, for the opening of Federal Parliament House in May, 1927. School children (averaging 330 per day) are conveyed to and from school.

#### GOODS TRANSPORT

This branch of the Transport Section has shown an exceptional increase in turnover in keeping with the great activities in constructional work. The figures are given below --

Metal haulage, 13,819 cubic yards by own lorries.  
Mileage run by hired lorries, 357,500.

Commissioned owned lorries have run 87,187 miles during the period and the approximate tonnage of material carted is 75,000 tons.

During the three weeks prior to the Royal Visit a daily average of 450 tons of general goods were transported to the various jobs in the field.

AW Harrison, BE, AMIE (Aust)  
Transport Officer.

[The next part of the report was on the fire brigade. It noted that in 1926/27 there were 71 calls: 1925/26 47 calls. They classified the fires under the following categories - Grass, Motor Car, Motor Lorry, Household, Sawdust, Miscellaneous.

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A letter reproduced in *Westlake One of the Vanished Suburbs of Canberra* (Gugler) and found in the Australian Archives follows:

It has a stamp with the following written in the rectangle - *FEDERAL CAPITAL COMMISSION. DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS. FCT BRANCH, CITY OMNIBUS SERVICE.* This stamp was a couple of months out of date as the Commission was ended in March 1930.

June 30th 1930

MEMORANDUM for:-

CIVIC ADMINISTRATOR

Subject:- Westlake Bus Service - Reference G30/1657

#### School Children

The arrangements for the conveyance of school children from Westlake to Telopea Park and Manuka Convent Schools are:

(1) AM The 8.34 am bus (No 1 Route) ex Ainslie calls at State Circle Shed (for Westlake) at 8.59am. The bus cannot be diverted to run to the settlement as it is necessary that this bus runs to timetable to connect with the train at Canberra Station.

(2) PM School Children (Special) 3.32 ex Telopea Park School, 3.36 pm ex Capitol Theatre [Manuka] to Westlake and Westridge. This bus could run into the settlement if so desired and afterwards proceed to Westridge with the remainder of the load.

#### FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICE

DOWN (1) The 6.45 pm ex Ainslie No 1 Route, State Circle arrive 7.10 pm.  
(2) The 7.5 pm ex Westridge calls at State Circle 7.21 pm  
(3) The 7.12 pm ex Ainslie, No 1 Route, State Circle arrive 7.37pm

(1) This bus arrives Causeway at 7.31 pm and leaves at 7.33 pm. No 2 Route therefore no time for deviation. To alter this bus it would be necessary to bring on extra staff as the meal hour cannot be fitted in otherwise. If this is done extra cost 12 shillings approximately.

(2) This bus arrives at Kingston at 7.35 pm and it is required to 7.40 pm to convey Members of Parliament to the Station. If any delay by deviation another crew would have to be brought out to work trip to Station and paid overtime rates. Cost wages 10/2d plus other running costs. Total approx 12/-if this is done.

(3) This bus cannot be altered to deviate to the settlement as the crew have to have meal hour between 8 pm and 8.45 pm.

UP (1) The 8.21 pm ex Canberra Station (No 1 Route) bus State Circle (for Westlake) at 8.41 pm arrives at Ainslie at 9.5 pm. This bus is not due to leave Ainslie until 9.15pm. A deviation could be made.

(2) The 9 pm Westridge bus No 1 Route, UP Friday, could run via State Circle (as on DOWN) without inconvenience.

#### SATURDAY NIGHT SERVICE

DOWN 1) The 7.15 pm ex Ainslie No 1 Route due State Circle 7.40 pm. This bus cannot be deviated as it must connect with the 8.20 pm train at Canberra Station...

Incidentally the bus service did not enter Westlake Settlement until the mid 1950s and then only for school children. Another document in Australian Archives is a petition written by the people of Westlake requesting a school bus. It is dated 15th March 1946 and is signed by the majority of people living in Westlake at that time.

This problem with buses for school children and workmen was not only a Westlake problem. Oaks Estate and others from other outlying areas also experienced a lack of bus facilities.

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Handwritten letter

Western Creek,  
Canberra  
23-6-30

Mr Christis,  
Chief Administrator  
FCT

Dear Sir,

On behalf of Residents of Cotter River and district, I beg to draw your attention to the condition of curtains and hood covering the school children's Bus, which are in a very bad state of repair. The result, that children travelling to school on wet days get wet and have to stay in wet clothes all day. There has been verbal complaints by the residents to Officers in charge of bus services but no action has been taken.

The bus referred to is the old Dodge plying on the Cotter River - Stromlo routes.

I am Yours faithfully.  
C Gibbs.

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Another letter dated 26th June, 1930 follows:

Memorandum for:- Civic Administrator

Subject:- Complaint re Cotter River Bus  
The attached letter from Mr Gibbs is noted. No verbal, or other, reports have been made to me.

It is recognised that the hood and curtains are not in good condition. The present state of the vehicle would not justify any further expense being incurred.



*The Mechanical Engineer will not agree to the use of a "Bean" bus for the Cotter service and I am not prepared to accept the responsibility of sending such a vehicle therefore the char-a-banc cannot be withdrawn from service for hood repairs even if such were justifiable.*

*The vehicle has been in commission since early 1925 and covered over 70,000 miles. To replace the hood would cost over 20 pounds and such expenditure is not justified. The hood is threadbare and unfit for repair.*

*I would refer you to my report of 16th June 1930 which stated interalia:-*

*(3) Char-a-banc. This vehicle has been condemned by the Mechanical Engineer as unsafe for use. In this I concur.*

*" As we are faced with replacement of this vehicle immediate steps will be necessary.*

*" I would suggest that a light vehicle be purchased to replace the char-a-banc as only 18 children travel from the Cotter, Western Creek etc.*

*HS Gargett  
Transport Officer.*

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*DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS  
FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY BRANCH  
23rd July, 1931*

*MEMORANDUM for*

*The Secretary,  
Department of Home Affairs,  
CANBERRA FCT*

*COTTER RIVER 'BUS SERVICE*

*Adverting to your memorandum of 26th May, 1931, No 30/6412 with reference to the Cotter River 'Bus Service, which serves the need of school children who are brought daily to Telopea Park School, I desire to advise that a suitable vehicle has been purchased from Messrs Williams, Hill and Cameron (1931) Ltd, and 18 passenger 1927 model "Studebaker Coach" at a cost of 340 pounds delivered to Canberra.*

*The vehicle was delivered to Canberra on the 4th July, 1931 and after minor adjustments had been made in the seating accommodation, the Coach was placed in commission on the 15th July, 1931.*

*CS Daley  
Civic Administrator*

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*Typewritten letter in Australian Archives noted as received 1 August 1932. Found in transport section of files.*

*COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF WORKS  
CANBERRA TRANSPORT SERVICES*

*The Director General of Works.*

*The existing transport equipment has been investigated, particularly from the maintenance point of view, and the following report is submitted for consideration.*

*The transport services may be divided under five headings:-*

- 1. City Omnibus Service.*
- 2. Special Duty Cars.*
- 3. Goods transport.*

4. Fire Brigade vehicles.

5. Motor cycles.

*Referring to these in detail:-*

1. City Omnibus Service

*The vehicles engaged on this service are:-*

5 - AEC Renown Type Buses.

3 - ADC Buses

4 - Bean Buses

1 - Graham Dodge Bus.

*The 5 AEC were purchased secondhand in 1926 and have run about 180,000 miles each. In about August 1928 250 pounds was spent on the body and 80 pounds on the mechanical overhaul of each. Since then maintenance has consisted only of effecting urgent running repairs, invariably carried out as rushed work, and usually at overtime rates. No opportunity has been afforded for examination and adjustment at regular intervals and the steering gear, drop arms, brake rods, and running gear have never been annealed, as is necessary in the interest of safety.*

*Lack of opportunity to properly open up and examine these buses prevents a definite expression of opinion as to their mechanical condition, but the fact that each has already run 180,000 miles suggests that they are rapidly nearing the end of their economic life and should be replaced in the near future. Of the three ADC units, two were purchased in August, 1928 and one in June 1929. The former are in fair average condition mechanically though they require a thorough overhaul and numerous repairs are required to the bodies.*

*The one purchased in 1929 is in good condition. The mileages run are 18,000 and 15,000 respectively. The ADC buses represent a later model of the AEC. The majority of parts are interchangeable, the only changes in design being in the direction of providing greater accessibility for repairs and maintenance.*

*The AEC and ADC are considered the most suitable type for Canberra conditions. They are recognised as a standard type throughout the world and have been adopted for general use by the London Omnibus Co.*

*Their main virtue lies in the fact, that, although the makers effect improvements in design periodically, their efforts in this direction are confined to providing greater accessibility and the parts themselves are not changed. Large stocks of spares are always available in Sydney and the Agents are prepared to supply up to 500 pounds worth on consignment.*

*The buses are of substantial and rugged construction, they have seating accommodation for 29 passengers and can carry a large overload in the form of standing passengers with comparative safety.*

*They are economical in maintenance and running costs and have a short turning radius, which is particularly advantageous considering the many sharp curves on Canberra roads. It is not thought that this type can be improved upon.*

*The four Bean buses are totally unsuitable for bus service. They have ordinary 50 cwt truck chassis, which were never intended to carry bus bodies. The chassis are in fair condition but the bodies are very poor.*

*The mileage run are No 8 8,800 miles, No 9 - 13,000, No 10 - 10,000 and No 11 - 10,000 miles. These buses have seating accommodation for 17 passengers only, and as standing passengers cannot be carried without risk of over turning, their carrying capacity is quite inadequate.*

*They are considered unsuitable and unsafe for the following reasons.*

1. *They are top heavy and liable to capsize. One has already done so when struck by a light car.*

2. *The driver's seat is too low and his view of the road, under certain conditions, so limited as to constitute a risk.*

3. *Their carrying capacity is inadequate and their maintenance and running costs higher than the larger AEC and ADC types.*

*It is suggested that these buses be converted to 50 cwt trucks. They are capable of much useful service in this capacity.*

*The Graham Dodge charabanc was purchased in early 1925 and has run over 100,000 miles. It is used for carrying school children from the Cotter River and Mount Stromlo to and from the schools. Its condition is bad and little can be done to improve it. This charabanc should be replaced at the earliest opportunity.*

*Before leaving the buses, it is desired to stress the need for better maintenance arrangements. No spare bus is carried and the others seldom enter the repair shop till they have actually broken down on the road. When one is sent in for repairs, it is usually required immediately to continue its run and lack of time prevents it from receiving adequate attention. Most of the work has to be done outside ordinary hours at overtime rates, thus unnecessarily increasing the cost of the work. Bus brakes and steering gear require examination each night in the interests of safety. At present this is effected by a mechanic stationed at the garage and under the control of the Transport Officer. This arrangement is not wholly satisfactory. In the event of none of the gear requiring adjustment, the mechanic can easily examine all the buses, but, should the first bus he examines require other adjustment the work may fully occupy his time, in which case the others escape examination. Such conditions may at any time lead to serious accident.*

*It is considered that the garage mechanic should be under the control of the mechanical engineer. Under this arrangement assistance can be made available when necessary, to ensure the examination of all vehicles and the responsibility for their safe condition will not be divided.*

## *2. Special Duty Cars.*

*The fleet of special duty cars comprises the following:-*

*1. Seven - 4 cylinder Armstrong Siddeley - 5 different models purchased between August 1925 and July 1927. Conditions of bodies and mechanical parts poor. All require extensive overhaul at fairly heavy cost.*

*2. Eight - 6 cylinder Armstrong Siddeley - 2 different models, all purchased in May 1927. Their condition is fair, and, after overhaul will be capable of giving good service.*

*3. Two - 4 cylinder Crossleys purchased in 1926 and 1927. These are old models for which spare parts are not obtainable. One is broken down and owing to inability to obtain spares, cannot be repaired. The other is in fair condition, but for the same reason its life must be short. The broken down car should be disposed of.*

*4. Four - Ford 4 cylinder - old type - 2 models. These are obsolete and should be disposed of.*

*From the above it will be seen that, in a total of 21 special service cars there are 10 different models. Six cars are recommended for disposal and the remainder should be sent to the repair shop, one at a time for proper overhaul.*

*The large number of models precludes the possibility of stocking spare parts. In making future purchases, some effort should be made towards standardization by adhering to one, or at most two makes of cars. The Armstrong Siddeley, which is mostly used at present is not considered the most suitable for Canberra conditions. Fords or Austin four cylinder models are suggested for light car service and Austin six cylinder models for heavier car service.*

## *3. Lorries etc.*

*The fleet consists of.*

*1. 4 - Ford trucks old models. These have reached the end of their economic life and are recommended for disposal.*

2. 6 - Thornycroft 5 ton lorries purchased 1926. These are used for road making during the day and three of them for street watering at night. Their condition is good, but they will be due for a general overhaul at an early date.

3. 2 - Thornycroft 2 ton lorries purchased 1929. These are practically new and in good condition. [The Thornycrofts had solid rubber tyres and the story told is that when leaving transport department at Kingston the drivers could take their hands off the wheels because the Thornycrofts went on in the tracks.]

4. 1 - Armstrong Siddeley Ambulance purchased in 1926. In good condition.

5. 5 - Ford trucks, new model 2-1 ton and 4 - 10cwt. All are in good condition except that used by the electrical maintenance branch. The latter is used for at least two shifts per day, and the daily mileage is exceptionally heavy. This truck will require replacement much earlier than the others.

6. 1 - Crossley truck - 1927 model. Condition good, but spare parts are very difficult to obtain.

#### 4. Fire Brigade Vehicles

1. 2 - Hotchkiss. Old model purchased prior to FCC control. Condition fair but spare parts are unobtainable from stock and have to be specially made at prohibitive cost.

2. 1 - Albion - purchased 1927. Condition good.

#### 5. Motor Cycles.

2 Off used by the Electrical Branch. Both are completely worn out and recently parts have been taken from one and used to keep the other in commission for a few weeks longer. Both require replacement either by cycles with side cars or by light cars. The latter, considering the nature of the service would probably prove ultimately as economical a proposition.

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. That the 4 Bean buses be converted to 50 cwt trucks.
2. Standardization of buses by confining future purchases to ADC model.
3. That each bus be returned to the workshop at regular intervals of at least once per fortnight for examination and maintenance and that a spare bus be retained to permit of the work being done without recourse to overtime.
4. That the daily examination of brakes, steering gear etc be placed under the control of the Mechanical Engineer.
5. That arrangements be made with the Agents for the AEC and ADC buses for the supply of complete sets of spare parts on consignment.
6. That the following vehicles be disposed of as worn out.
  - 1 Graham Dodge Charabanc
  - 1 - 4 cylinder Crossley car.
  - 4 - Ford cars - old model
  - 4 - Ford trucks - old model
  - 2 - Motor cycles.
7. That future purchase of service cars and lorries be confined to one, or at most, two makes to facilitate their economical maintenance.

J Fleming  
Chief Mechanical Engineer.

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Australian Archives A659/1 31/1/13365. The following article was cut out from *The Canberra Times* and refers to an incident that occurred in 1933. A date on a note on the side of the page requesting information is dated 9/6/33.

***Dangerous Bus, Driver Collapses at Wheel  
Poisoned by Gas Fumes - Vehicle Runs Off Road.***

*A serious accident was narrowly averted when the driver of No 10 bus collapsed at the wheel, due to carbon monoxide poisoning, and vehicle left the road opposite Canberra House shortly before 8 o'clock last night.*

*Frequent complaints have been made by drivers of the dangerous condition of the driver's box, which is filled with fumes whenever the engine of the bus is running at high speed in hill climbing, and on several occasions, drivers have been overcome by fumes.*

*There was no conductor on the 'bus at the time of the accident, and the presence of mind of the driver in switching off the engine before losing consciousness probably averted injury to the passengers.*

*The 'bus left Kingston at 7pm but the driver was unable to keep up to time as every time the vehicle climbed a hill or slowed down, the fumes from the engine were suffocating.*

*As the 'bus proceeded on its way the driver (Mr Townsend) felt the fumes more and more, and when he reached the bundy at Acton Offices he staggered across the road to the clock, and had to wait some time before he recovered. In the absence of a conductor he was unable to do other than persevere towards the terminus.*

*Climbing the hill to Acton he gradually became overcome with the fumes and at the corner of Canberra house he collapsed.*

*The vehicle was carrying a fair complement of passengers, but none suffered injury.*

*Mr Townsend was quickly rushed to hospital, suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, and was admitted by the Superintendent (Dr LW Nott). At a late hour last night Mr Townsend was reported to be recovering and it is hoped that he will leave hospital today.*

**COMPLAINTS DISREGARDED**

*The accident marked the climax to many complaints that have been made by members of the transport staff concerning the danger of driving this particular bus. Twelve months ago the 'bus was the subject of investigation by the transport authorities, and it was then decided to allow it to remain on the road for a period of twelve months. Since then however, many drivers have had to seek medical advice regarding the ill effects they had felt after driving it...*



Above: Early 1950s at Westlake. The School Bus picking up children outside 27 Westlake - now at the corner of Empire Circuit and Forster Crescent, Yarralumla in Stirling Park. The bus conductor usually stood on the steps where the children are entering the bus. The fare was one penny each way. Photograph courtesy of Angela Ivanovici.

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## Mrs Helen Antoinette Barton & Her Safety Coach

Mrs Barton ran the first omnibus service between Canberra and Queanbeyan. She was also one of the first to become involved with the tourist industry to show visitors around Canberra. Following are a number of documents found in Australian Archives referring to this lady who died in her early fifties. She is with her husband, buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery in Reid. Her first known accommodation in Canberra was Hotel Canberra and an early panoramic photograph taken from the area of the Provisional Parliament House shows her *Safety Coach* parked at the rear of the Hotel at Hunt's Garage. Another early Queanbeyan Omnibus service was run by Dawson's who sold out to Quodling Bros.

Mrs Barton for a time lived in the Hotel Acton. She seems to have had problems wherever she moved. Following are two letters written by her in 1928 during her stay at the Hotel Acton. They are to be found in Australian Archives A6266/1 G30/855 and other documents. They are as follows:

Australian Archives: A6272/1 E564

*FEDERAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
12th October 1927*

*Dear Madam,*

*Omnibus Service, Canberra*

*The Commission directs me to advise you that, after further negotiation, it has accepted the modified offer - in which it is understood you are interested - of Mr ET Holmes, to conduct a City Omnibus Service in Canberra, such service is to be operated on the 5th December, 1927, at latest, or earlier if possible.*

*The arrangements will provide that Mr Holmes' Company shall have the sole rights to conduct a City Omnibus Service on certain specified routes. The Commission therefore - as far as your personal bus service is concerned as distinct from any interest you will have in Mr Holmes' Company - hereby gives you formal notice that as from one month from this date, you will not be permitted to conduct an Omnibus Service within the City area. It is expected that the new Company will be in operation by that date, but, should it not be, there will be no objection, if you so desire, to carry on from week to week, until such time as the service to be instituted by Mr Holmes is in operation, but not later than the 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1927.*

*I am to make clear that this relates to the City Bus Service only. The Commission will be prepared to issue a Motor Omnibus License to any individual or company to take passengers from Canberra to Queanbeyan or bring them from Queanbeyan to Canberra. It would be necessary however, for you to make application for permission to run such a service and to comply with the provisions of the Motor Traffic Ordinance 1926/27.*

*Yours faithfully,  
C Daley  
Secretary Federal Capital Commission.*

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*BARTON'S SAFETY COACH SERVICE  
Hotel Acton,  
CANBERRA FCT  
16th July, 1928.*

Dear Sir

RE TELEPHONE

Further to my 'phone message on Friday last I should be glad to know if the Commission will allow me to install my own telephone in my bedroom at Hotel Acton for the next couple of three months until I go into my own house.

I would put in a table set and wire can come through a ventilator, not injuring in any way, the walls. It has been very difficult to be sure of 'phone messages reaching me after the Office staff, which is now very attentive, has gone off duty, and this seems to be the best arrangement I can make.

I should like it to be understood, however, that any calls on the Hotel 'phone for me, be operated as usual, the service, to which as a guest, I am entitled. I will use every endeavour to establish my number by advertising &c, but I wish to avoid inconvenience and expense to anyone wishing to speak to me on the 'phone by being told at the Office to ring my own number; my calls are few, business is so slack, but I think my proposal is advisable, and trust that it meets with approval.

Yours faithfully,  
Helen Barton

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BARTON'S SAFETY COACH SERVICE  
Hotel Acton,  
CANBERRA FCT  
16th July, 1928.

The Secretary,  
Federal Capital Commission,  
CANBERRA.

Dear Sir,

RE DISTURBANCE IN PAVILIONS AT HOTEL ACTON

With regard to our conversation on Friday last re disturbance in my pavilion at nights, and your promise to look into the matter, I have to state that on Friday evening during the dance at Acton the trouble was worse than ever. Mrs Soppet, the Manageress, did come up once but apparently she is not strong enough to control it, as after she had gone it was as bad as ever, visitors continuing up and down till 2.30 am, gramophones playing, both lavatories being freely used, to which I distinctly object. There is only one other lady besides myself living in this passage, and it is very unpleasant that strangers and staff are allowed to make free use of the Ladies' lavatory here on evenings like this.

Following this on Sunday night members of the Staff had a very noisy party in the Maid's room at the end of the passage to which strange men were admitted, and at eleven o'clock, as no-one appeared to check it I rang for the porter and asked that he would fetch Mrs Soppet; he returned with a message that she was in bed and wished to know what I wanted. As the matter was one which I did not dare to discuss with the porter, he refusing to fetch her unless I stated my business, I went down myself with him to her room. Her door was locked, and on being bidden by her to enter the key was found in the porter's pocket. She was in bed and I explained that one of the men out of the maid's room, where a party was being held, had vomited all over the Gentleman's bathroom and was at that moment in the Ladies' lavatory, next my bedroom and terribly drunk. I begged that she would come up at once; For answer Mrs Soppett told me in the presence of her porter that I was a perfect nuisance and expressed herself very annoyed and unwilling to be bothered about the matter till I suggested ringing up Sir John Butters. She came upstairs in time to meet the man coming out of the Ladies Lavatory, also to hear the noise about which I complained in the Maid's room, therefore, her somewhat protracted discussion in the passage between here and her staff was as unnecessary as it was unedifying; she allowed them to stand up and argue with her as to whether

they were making a noise, or whether I had cause to complain, my name being freely used by both parties in a manner distinctly objectionable. It was some considerable time before the noise abated.

Naturally I would take the earliest opportunity possible, had my house been ready of moving; as it is, just at present, I must continue in residence at Acton for a short while longer. I trust I shall not be considered out of order in making this complaint. I may say I am exceedingly distressed and shaken by the whole matter. I have had very little opportunity to obtain any rest for several nights owing to the noise. I would like to add that some months back we were many of us very much disturbed by similar occurrences, but since the dances have been held in the Albert Hall matters have very much improved until preparations began again for the dance last week; dances, in this house have always been a signal for the importation of much extra liquor with the usual unpleasant accompaniments amongst the younger members of both guests and staff.

I should like to say that I am exceedingly sorry to have to report the old chamber-maid in whose room the party took place on Sunday night last, - drink is her failing, but she does not seek it herself - it is the fault of the visitors who ply her with it to keep her from reporting their own misdoings.

Such occurrences as these were unknown in Miss Southwell's time, the staff, many of them the same people as present employed, was excellent under her discipline; something is seriously wrong at present and when Sir John Butters knows I am certain that he will not tolerate such conditions for one moment.

Will you be good enough to acquaint him of this letter?

Yours faithfully,  
Helen Barton

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Australian Archives A431/1 46/766

#### SCHEDULE "B"

The routes to be followed by the motor omnibuses engaged in the Motor Omnibus Passenger Service conducted by MRS HELEN ANTOINETTE BARTON, after leaving Mort Street Braddon shall be in accordance with the timetable and by way of:-  
Girrahween Street, BRADDON, Corroboree Park, AINSLIE, Coranderrk Street, REID, Doonkuna Street, Elouera Street, Torrens Street and Cooyong Streets, BRADDON, London Circuit, CITY, Gordon Street and Lennox Crossing, ACTON, Commonwealth Avenue and the rear of Parliament House, PARKES, National Circuit and Brisbane Avenue, Macquarie Street, New South Wales Crescent, ARTON, National Circuit and Franklin Street, FORREST, Furneaux Street, Bougainville Street, Flinders Way, Capitol Theatre and Canberra Avenue, GRIFFITH, Giles Street, Kennedy Street, Burke Crescent and Wentworth Avenue, KINGSTON, MOLONGLO VILLAGE and QUEANBEYAN, and conversely for the return journeys.

Provided that in all trips which leave the Depot at 6.10am and 8am daily, excepting Sundays; and 5 pm Mondays to Fridays; 8.50pm Fridays: 12.49, and 2.10 pm Saturdays and for the trip which leaves City at 6.5pm week days excepting Fridays and Saturdays, the omnibuses shall proceed via Brisbane Avenue and Wentworth Avenue direct to Giles Street, KINGSTON; And conversely for the return journeys from QUEANBEYAN, leaving the Royal Hotel at 12 noon, daily except Sundays; 4.24pm and 5.35 pm Mondays to Fridays;

6.40pm week days excepting Fridays and Saturdays; 9.30pm Fridays and 1.28pm,  
3.25pm and 5.40pm Saturdays.

Provided further, that, in all trips which leave the Depot, BRADDON, at 8.2am daily excepting Sundays; 3.45pm and 5pm Mondays to Fridays; and also the trip leaving CITY at 6.5 pm on week days excepting Fridays and Saturdays, the omnibus shall proceed from CITY via London Circuit, western side, along Commonwealth Avenue Bridge to the rear of Parliament House, and conversely on the return journeys leaving Royal Hotel, QUEANBEYAN at 8.40am daily excepting Sundays; 4.24pm and 5.35 pm Mondays to Fridays; 6.40pm week days excepting Fridays and Saturdays, 1.28 and 3.25 pm on Saturdays.



*This is the schedule marked "B" referred to in License No1 to Conduct a Motor Omnibus Passenger Service, issued to MRS HELEN ANTOINETTE BARTON, for SIX MONTHS from the 3rd March, 1934.  
[Signature unreadable but may be] DS Burgess Registrar of Motor Vehicles*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
No. 34/3812

*Mr Burgess.*

COMPLAINT BY MRS HELEN BARTON

*With reference to the letter dated 18th October, 1935, from Mrs Helen Barton, Barton's Safety Coach Service Station, Canberra, regarding the omnibus timetable to operate to and from Queanbeyan, I have to state that Mrs Barton's complains may be summed up as follows:-*

- 1. Mrs Barton objects to Messrs Quodling Bros. being allowed to operate a bus service to suit the Commonwealth offices in Canberra, both morning and afternoons;*
- 2. Objection is also taken to Messrs Quodling Bros. commencing a bus run 15 minutes after her own - it being regarded as no protection to her service, but an advantage to have the later run.*
- 3. Separation is also requested on the daily morning runs from Queanbeyan.*

*The remainder of Mrs Barton's letter consists of wide statements without bearing on the main issue, and demanding preference as she pioneered the service. A comparison of the timetable on the basis of the complaints indicated above shows:-*

***Barton's Omnibus Service***

*Morning: Leave Border Territory and Queanbeyan..... 7.50  
Arrive Canberra Northbourne Avenue 8.18*

***Quodling Bros Omnibus Service***

*Morning: Leave Border Territory and Queanbeyan.....8.5  
Arrive Canberra Northbourne Avenue 3.29*

***Barton's Omnibus Service***

*Arrive Queanbeyan...5.15  
Leave City Northbourne Avenue... 5.5  
Arrive Queanbeyan... 5.29*

***Quodling Bros Omnibus Service***

*Leave City Northbourne Avenue.. 4.55  
Arrive Queanbeyan ...5.21  
Leave Ainslie...5.1  
Arrive Queanbeyan...5.36*

*With regard to No 1 herein, I fail to see any advantage to Quodling Bros. on the times shown above. In my opinion the times allotted to Mrs Barton are more convenient than those of Messrs. Quodling Bros. One solution, and I do not think Messrs Quodling Bros would raise any objections, would be to change the timetable for that particular run, giving Mrs Barton the times allotted to Quodling Bros. and vice versa. If Mrs Barton is sincere in her objections she will also accept. Objections 2 and 3 may be grouped together, and dismissed. Mrs Barton has practically no cause for complaint. I have carefully studied the two timetables and consider that the arrangement of runs to and from Canberra is very fair to both parties with, if any, preference in favour of Mrs Barton...*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
QUODLING BROS. MOTOR OMNIBUS SERVICE  
LICENCING OF THE NEW "REO" OMNIBUS

*THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY*

*(Civic Representative): I have to report that on Monday the new "Reo" motor omnibus was licensed for Messrs Quodling Bros in lieu of an old vehicle which had been taken over from Dawson's Omnibus service.*

*The new vehicle is an up to date type of omnibus with padded rubber seats, rubber floor, ample seating space and accommodation for thirty-two seated passengers.*

*The old vehicle has been disposed of in the State of New South Wales. Having been in use for a number of years this vehicle was unfit for further use both from the point of view of mechanical reliability and comfort to passengers.*

*Messrs Quodling Bros gave notice that they intended to obtain a new vehicle in view of the difficulties they had had with the old vehicle on account of frequent mechanical troubles which had arisen from time to time.*

*I have made enquiries over a long period regarding the two omnibus services operating between Canberra and Queanbeyan and have noted that for some considerable time the two omnibuses operated by Quodling Bros have been full on the morning and afternoon runs. It was reported on several occasions that the old Reo omnibus, which was licensed to carry sixteen seated passengers only, had been overcrowded. This has been admitted by persons who have travelled on the omnibus and by the Police. Mrs Barton in her representations to the Secretary on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 1935 complained about the overcrowding at peak periods on Quodling's omnibuses. This overcrowding has been noted particularly since Mrs Barton withdrew her second omnibus from the service in February last.*

*It appears that Mrs Barton's omnibus on the morning and afternoon runs is not always full of passengers. The reason why Quodlings omnibuses are nearly always packed at the peak periods while Mrs Barton's omnibus sometimes has a seat or two to spare is that a large section of the Queanbeyan people refuse to travel on Mrs Barton's omnibus, and some have even stated that they would prefer any discomfort to patronizing Mrs Barton. I understand that this prejudice against Mrs Barton was accentuated by reason of some disagreement at the time of the Eucharistic Congress in Queanbeyan.*

*Enquiries also disclosed that the majority of the people who travel on Quodling's omnibus are public servants, who for some reason best known to themselves desire to arrive in Canberra at the times laid down for Quodling's service.*

*There was certainly a demand for a substitute omnibus for Quodling's service as the old one was not reliable and not comfortable. In my opinion it would have been quite unjust to have insisted on the purchase of a small 'bus by Quodlings with the idea of attempting to assist Mrs Barton's business, when she has made little or no attempt to satisfy the public's demands. She took one omnibus off the service partly because of the opportunity, which arose to employ the omnibus elsewhere.*

*The Queanbeyan people contend that the new omnibus is a great improvement to the comfort and safety of the passengers as the old vehicle was incapable of carrying the required number of passengers at the suitable times....*

Mrs Barton died on 9th April 1938. She was 59 years of age. Her husband, Richard predeceased her and died on 20th October 1933. He was 55 years of age. Both are buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery in Reid ACT. Their graves are unmarked.

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Quodling Bros continued with the service between Canberra and Queanbeyan. An example of the correspondence between the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Interior, Canberra FCT dated 3rd April, 1940 follows:

*Dear Sirs,*

*I desire to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 12th March, and to regret, that through inadvertence, an acknowledgment was not forwarded at an earlier date.*

*With regard to the enquiries contained therein, I have to state that there will no objection to the 'bus leaving the Royal Hotel Queanbeyan at 6.45 am via Oaks Estate to the aerodrome, and continuing to Paterson Street, Ainslie via Pialligo Avenue and Lister Crescent. The return trip made commences at Ainslie at 5 pm or at the aerodrome at 5 pm returning to Queanbeyan via the Oaks Estate.*

*Permission is also granted to run a 'bus from Queanbeyan on Saturday only leaving the Royal Hotel, Queanbeyan and proceeding via the Yass Road, terminating at the Royal Military College. This 'bus will return to Queanbeyan, from Duntroon at 6.30 pm and returning again to the Royal Military College at the termination of the pictures in Queanbeyan.*

*Approval is given for the deletion of the trip from the Prime Minister's Lodge to the Canberra Brickworks at 7.20 am and return from the Brickworks at 5 pm.*

*Will you please be good enough to advise as early as possible the fares to be charged for the two trips referred to above, so that amendments may be made to your timetable.*

*At the same time I should be glad if you would forward your Licence for endorsement.*

*Yours faithfully,  
WJ Mildenhall  
Acting Registrar of Motor Vehicles.*

*Messrs Quodling Bros  
Box 37 PO  
Queanbeyan NSW*

Australian Archives A1/1 37/5481.

A letter from Quodling Brothers dated 9th August 1935 mentioned that Quodling Bros took over from Mr Angus Dawson and renewed from 2nd December 1935. The changeover should take place from 3rd August. Referred to a Reo Bus Chassis No 603 and insured from 18th November, 1935.

The same file contained a list of buses owned and used in 1940. They were at 16th June, 1940:

<i>3rd Party NSW Policy number</i>		<i>ACT No</i>
<i>Omnibus</i>		
<i>103220</i>	<i>Ruggles</i>	<i>M/O 019</i>
<i>91732</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>M/O 455</i>
<i>914798</i>	<i>Reo</i>	<i>M/O 01</i>
<i>98036</i>	<i>Reo</i>	<i>M/O 443</i>
<i>94796</i>	<i>Reo</i>	<i>ECT/M/O 12</i>

A letter dated 28th June, 1943 mentioned that M.01, M.02 and NSW MO 433 had gas units fitted. The second World War started in 1939 and finished in 1945. Fuel rationing was in place in Australia.

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Handwritten letter from the Secretary of Oaks Estate Progress Association 8.7.1942

*Secretary, Mr W Pavy  
George Street Oaks Estate  
Via Queanbeyan*

*Mr Waterman,  
Dear Sir,*

*I have been instructed by the above association to write to you protesting that the bus which has been put on for the Oaks Estate workmen cannot carry same as the 6.45 bus mentioned in your letter to us is fully loaded when it arrives at the Hotel Queanbeyan and then on the*

*return trip it does not stop at the Power House as it is fully loaded and as the Power House is the point where the majority of our workmen travel to and from we fail to see where the additional bus is of any benefit to the workmen of Oaks Estate so we would be very pleased if you would do something further in this matter and advise us as soon as possible as the matter is urgent.*

*W Pavy Secretary [Oaks Estate Progress Association]*

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Above: The Canberra Steam Laundry 1926. This was near the site of the Railway Station at Civic Centre. The rail line went from Kingston across the Causeway and thence in front of War Memorial and behind St John the Baptist Church in Reid to Civic. The laundry provided work for many women.

**General documents re omnibus and general transport needs FCT**

**Privatisation:** Australian Archives A6272 E/564

*All letters to be addressed to*

*The Secretary*

*BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS*

*FINANCIERS*

*BROKERS*

*CONVEYANCERS*

*INSURANCE AGENTS*

*TRUSTEES & EXECUTORS*

*MANAGING DIRECTOR*

*JOHN DEANS*

*GENERAL MANAGER & SECRETARY*

*LG FUSSELL*

*CANBERRA 22nd July, 1927*

*Federal Capital Territory*

*The Secretary*

*Federal Capital Territory*

*CANBERRA FCT*

*Dear Sir,*

*With reference to your letter of the 21st inst, forwarding me application form and conditions for the carrying on of a Motor Omnibus Service in Canberra and the Federal Capital Territory, I desire to advise you that I have carefully perused the conditions, and I am not prepared to put in an application on the terms and conditions set out.*

*The principal disability is the period of rights which is stated to be ten years. I pointed out in a previous letter that there would be no inducement to provide for the essential machine shops and garages for this short period.*

*Should the Commission be prepared to consider an application with a longer period of rights, I would be prepared to make application. The Commission will no doubt appreciate that, to put in a genuine application for this service would entail considerable expense, and it is considered that the present terms and conditions do not justify this being done.*

*Yours faithfully  
John Deans*

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A6272/1 E564 Australian Archives

*FEDERAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
12th October, 1927*

Dear Madam [Mrs H Barton],

*Omnibus Service, Canberra*

*The Commission directs me to advise you that, after further negotiations it has accepted the modified offer - in which it is understood you are interested - of Mr T Holmes, to conduct a City Omnibus Service in Canberra, such service to be operated on the 5th December, 1927 at the latest, or earlier if possible.*

*The arrangement will provide that Mr Holmes' Company shall have the sole rights to conduct a City Omnibus Service on certain specified routes. The Commission therefore - as far as your personal bus service is concerned as distinct from any interest you will have in Mr Holmes' Company - hereby gives you formal notice that, as from one month from this date, you will not be permitted to conduct and Omnibus Service within the City Area. It is expected that the new company will be operating by that date, but, should it not be, there will be no objection, if you so desire, to carry on from week to week until such time as the service to be instituted by Mr Holmes is in operation, but not later than the 4th December, 1927.*

*I am to make clear that this relates to the City Bus Service only. The Commission will be prepared to issue a Motor Omnibus License to any individual or company to take passengers from Canberra to Queanbeyan or bring them from Queanbeyan to Canberra. It would be necessary however, for you to make application for permission to run such a service and to comply with the provisions of the Motor Traffic Ordinance 1926/27.*

*Yours faithfully  
C Daley  
Secretary*

*Federal Capital Commission.*

[NB The promised privatised bus service did not eventuate and from reading a number of letters in archives it is possible that Mrs Barton was considered to be a nuisance.]

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A6272/1 E/564

*FEDERAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
5th August, 1927*

Dear Sir,

*With reference to your letter of 26th July, 1927 respecting conditions prevailing in Canberra in connection with the conduct of motor omnibus services, I have to advise as follows:-*

*The following wages are being paid by the Commission to its drivers and conductors:-*

	<i>Per Week</i>
<i>'Bus Driver</i>	<i>6 pounds</i>
<i>'Bus Conductors</i>	
<i>Under 17 years</i>	<i>3 pounds, 2 shillings and six pence</i>
<i>Under 18 years</i>	<i>3 pounds 11 shillings</i>
<i>Under 19 years</i>	<i>4 pounds 2 shillings</i>
<i>Under 20 years</i>	<i>4 pounds 8 shillings</i>

*Adults 5 pounds*

*The rates were fixed by the Industrial Board in the Territory for the Seat of Government, whose awards are binding on the Commission and its contractors.*

*So far, it is not obligatory upon other employers to comply with the Board's awards. At the same time the awards appear to be recognised as a guide for fixation of wages, generally by private enterprise in the Territory.*

*In effect, the classifications for the 'bus drivers and conductors would apply to no employees in the Territory. In the event of the Commission's own service being withdrawn.*

*The wages prescribed in the awards of the Industrial Board are slightly higher for all classes of labour, than the rates paid in the NSW metropolitan areas, and no doubt it will be within your knowledge that a recent award by the Deputy Industrial Commissioner, for NSW provides, inter alia, for an increased rate of 5 pounds 15 shillings for bus drivers.*

*Under the Federal Territory Award, the 'bus employees work 44 hours a week, and are required to work in shifts as may be found necessary. A 44 hour week applied generally to all classes of labour governed by Awards here.*

*Without committing the Commission in any way, it can be said that approximately 7,000 people reside in the Federal Capital Territory, of which a number, 5,000 live within the city area. There will an assured and regular increase in the latter number during the next two or three years, as a result of the gradual transfer of Commonwealth Public Service from Melbourne, and the concurrent activities of private enterprise.*

*It is regretted that sufficient information is not available just now as to the exact population served by the respective routes "A" & "B". As far as the area of population is concerned, it is roughly estimated that the abovementioned 5,000 are distributed between the area on the North side and the area on the South side of the River Molonglo shown on the map, in the proportions of 40% and 50% respectively. The North side embraces the residential suburb of Ainslie and four workmen's camps, whilst the South side embraces the residential suburbs of Causeway, Eastlake, Blandfordia, and Red Hill as well as four workmen's camps.*

*The task of estimating the volume of traffic that could be expected of the respective routes, appears to be one calling for detailed and expert investigation, in view of the many factors peculiar to the layout and progress in development of the city.*

*The approved licenses of an omnibus service would be required by the Commission to effect insurance to a reasonable extent in respect of each motor omnibus, against claims through death, injury, fire and accident with an Insurance Company approved by the Federal Capital Commission, and policies being lodged with the Commission for the period for which the license is available.*

*Yours faithfully  
CS Daley  
Secretary  
Federal Capital Territory*

*Mr TCS Reynolds  
KESWICK  
South Australia*

---

Handwritten letter Australian Archives A6272/1 E/564

*Eastlake  
August 18th 1927*

*To  
The Secretary  
Federal Capital Commission*

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed tender form for hire car service. I am a resident of Eastlake, and have two cars which are doing nothing. One is a new Studebaker Coach and the other one is a seven passenger Buick. I could also get a new "Chrysler" Coach at once if it were necessary for me to have three cars. I have a five ton "Thornycroft" tipping lorry which I cannot get work for. As I am a married man and my wife has gone to the expense of buying a house at "Eastlake" I would be pleased if you would let me know if there is any possible hope of getting work with the cars, or lorry, in the Territory.

I am,  
Yours Faithfully,  
WS Cassell  
Eastlake.

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Another letter in Australian Archives A4390/1 G303 dated 28th October, 1930 Memorandum to the Civic Administrator from D Burgess, Registration Officer draws attention to problems faced by people who used private vehicles for paid passengers. The letter follows:

*BEECHER'S UNREGISTERED MOTOR VEHICLE*

*On the 14th October last, on complaint being made to me by Mrs Dawson that there was a motor vehicle owned by a Mr Beecher carrying passengers for hire daily between Canberra and Queanbeyan, I brought the matter to the notice of the Chief Officer of Police, and asked him to take whatever action was necessary to ensure that the provisions of the Ordinance be adhered to.*

*The report of the Chief Officer of Police herein intimates that on Beecher's own statement, he is contravening Section 30 Sub-section 1, of the Motor Traffic Ordinance 1926-1927. Mr Beecher called to see me on Saturday morning, 25th October, and admitted that he was running a service contrary to the provisions of Section 30. I invited his attention to Section 27, Sub-sections 2 and 10, as well as to the provisions of Section 30 of the Ordinance. Section 27 provides that it is an offence for a person to ply for hire or carry passengers for any monetary or other material consideration without being licensed in that regard. Sub-section 10 of Section 27 makes it an offence to use a public vehicle as a motor omnibus unless registered as a motor omnibus.*

*Beecher's vehicle is not registered as a motor car, a public hire car, or a motor omnibus, under the Motor Traffic Ordinance. The Police report that his motor omnibus is registered in New South Wales. He is employed as a carpenter by Simmie and Company at the Institute of Anatomy and carries a full load of passengers from Queanbeyan in the morning, and back again after work, in the evening.*

*I informed Mr Beecher that it was regretted that his vehicle could not be recognised as an omnibus plying for hire in the Territory even though he made application in the ordinary way. He was advised to cease carrying passengers immediately, otherwise the Police would be reluctantly compelled to take action against him.*

*Apparently the Police do not intend to take action against Beecher without definite instruction. The matter is now referred for your direction as to whether an instruction to take legal proceedings should be sent to the Attorney-General's Department, or the Police.*

A handwritten note on the bottom Ask Police to take action for contravention if evidence available.  
A Police Report (A430/1 G303 Australian Archives) dated 18th October, 1930 written by Constable W J Tandy, Relative to Richard George Beechup, unregistered Motor Omnibus NSW No 223.419 is as follows:

Constable Davies,  
Canberra

*I beg to report having interviewed Richard George Beecher, who resides at Mowatt Street, Queanbeyan and employed at his trade as a carpenter by Simmie & Co at the Institute of Anatomy, Canberra. He*

*informed me that he had recently had his Chevrolet Bus done up and reigisted on the 4th October last in his wife's name (Adelaide) in the State of NSW at a registration fee of 13 pounds 8/-.*

*The passengers he carries to and from Queanbeyan are 7 tradesmen employed at the same job at a fare of 6/- per week, and 2 girls employed at the Laundry [Civic] who also reside at Queanbeyan for a fare of 5/- per week, also 3 girls to and from Molonglo at 4/- per week. He runs 5 days per week - Monday to Friday - leaving Queanbeyan at about 7 am and arrives at the Institute at about 7.30am, the men get out t here and a young man named Herbert Speering of Molonglo who is employed at the Laundry usually takes the bus on there with the girls and calls back at the Institute about 5 pm.*

*He informed me that prior to the re-running of his bus he had an old Hupmobile car which was registered in the State with which he was conveying the same girls to and from the Laundry, but having recently disposed of the car the girls now travel by his bus.*

*He does not desire to evade payment of any registration fee which he may be called upon to pay, but cannot possibly run to a time table - running only 5 days a week for the convenience of his workmates and he himself working at his trade daily, and is quite willing to make an appointment to discuss the matter at the Traffic Office preferably on Saturday morning next the 25th inst at 10 am if suitable.*

[signed] W J Tandy  
Constable No 2

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*The Chief Officer of Police  
Canberra*

*It appears from the statement above of Mr Beecher, that he is contravening section 30 of the Motor Traffic Ordinance, sub sec. (1), he could be called upon to register his vehicle as a motor omnibus, he is running to a timetable now on his own admission, although only five days a week, perhaps if he submitted that timetable with his application for a motor omnibus passenger license, it would be approved, as he has been quite open in the matter, and is not attempting to conceal anything.*

[signed] A D Davies  
Constable No 4  
19/10/30

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### Special Duty Cars

The Transport Fleet had a number of vehicles used for officials and a number of trucks. Australian Archives has a number of documents that list these vehicles and the costs of running along with the people to whom they were allocated. One example is file CT86/1/1 130. Information on the sheets include - Car, [Costs] Petrol, Oil and Grease, Wages, Depreciation Interest & Maintenance, Overhead, Total, Earnings, Balance for period, Miles, Cost per mile, Miles per Gallon, Balance Working Account, Balance Maintenance Account. The following extract gives the name of vehicle, type of vehicle, Miles, Miles per Gallon for the period ended 24.5.1927 (one month).

<i>Car</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Miles per Gallon</i>
<i>Commissioner A'strong Sedan C1</i>	<i>682</i>	<i>15.5</i>
<i>Commissioner A'strong Sedan C2</i>	<i>821</i>	<i>18.66</i>
<i>Potts, A'strong Sidd 21</i>	<i>592</i>	<i>15.18</i>
<i>Farrow, Ford 24</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>11.74</i>
<i>Douglas, A'Strong Sidd 25</i>	<i>437</i>	<i>21.85</i>
<i>Brackenreg " " 26</i>	<i>492</i>	<i>22.36</i>
<i>Mildenhall " " 27</i>	<i>745</i>	<i>25.68</i>
<i>McKinnon, Ford 30</i>	<i>610</i>	<i>15.25</i>
<i>Cook, Ford 31</i>	<i>983</i>	<i>19.66</i>



<i>Weston &amp; Honeysett, Ford 32</i>	204		14.57
<i>Knox, Ford 33</i>	662		23.64
<i>Fleetwood, Ford 34</i>	1172		19.55
<i>Honeysett, Ford 36</i>	296		10.57
<i>Brownless, Ford 38</i>	660		15
<i>Bancroft, Morris Crowley 39</i>	641		30.52
<i>Fleetwood &amp; McKinnon, Ford 40</i>	289		14.45
<i>McHoul, Ford 41</i>	517		16.68
<i>Rutledge, Ford 42</i>	493		17.6
<i>Atkins, Ford 43</i>	495		20.62
<i>Brownless, Ford 44</i>	120		OA
<i>Bruce, Ford 45</i>	719	17.53	
<i>Nish, Ford 46</i>	746	17.35	
<i>Priddle, Ford 48</i>	550	13.75	
<i>Hartley, Ford Tray L2</i>	701	20.62	
<i>Bruce, Ford Truck L6</i>	641	13.64	
<i>Bruce, Ford Tray L4</i>	777	17.27	
<i>Electrical Shop Ford Truck L5</i>	1026		16.55
<i>Marsh, Ford Truck L13</i>	438	9.13	
<i>Martin, Ford Tray L18</i>	1008	12.6	
<i>Moore, Ford Tray L20</i>	583	19.43	

Another document A431/1 53/997 From the Transport Office in Kingston dated 14th March, 1942 to the Assistant Secretary, Canberra Services Branch is a Memorandum re 'BUS SERVICE TO MOUNT STROMLO OBSERVATORY'. It refers to the service to this work site not part of the normal routes in the city. It is as follows:

1. *In connection with the transport of employees to the Mount Stromlo workshops, information is to hand that not less than eighteen workmen now require transport for five days per week, who start and finish at the same time.*
2. *The Traffic Inspector and Transport Officer visited Mount Stromlo on the 13th instant and discussed the requirements with Dr Wooley and Mr Rimmer, and arrived at the following arrangements:-*  
  
*Commencing on Tuesday 17th instant the small diesel 'bus will leave the 'Bus Depot and depart from Giles Street, Kingston at 7.40am and connect with the 'bus arriving at 7.50 am ex-Ainslie at Hotel Canberra, arriving at 8.30 am for Girls' Grammar, Convent and Telopea Park Schools, picking up other passengers from Mount Stromlo for a 1/- fare for single journeys. In the afternoon depart Stromlo 4.35 pm to 4.40 pm to Hotel Canberra connecting with Ainslie 'buses, thence to Post Office, Giles Street and Depot.*
3. *The debit for the running of the 'bus for the Mount Stromlo staff will be a charge against munitions Job No 3407 and record of milage will be kept and forwarded from Depot to Costing Section on running docket for recovery monthly.*
4. *The institution of the 'bus service will reduce the five days car service from three to two.*
5. *The private car used at present for taking school children from the top of the Mountain to the Cotter Road, will be no longer required and the person performing this service should be notified accordingly by the Civic Administrator immediately.*
6. *The shopping and picture car service required for Friday night and Saturday morning to remain as at present.*

CEF Roach, [NB Mr Roach's nick name was Cocky .]  
Transport Officer

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A6266/1 G 29/852 Example of one of the problems faced by people living in Reid.

Canberra 28.2.1928  
The Chairman,  
Canberra (Public Service) Committee

Dear Sir,

*We desire to bring under the notice of the Canberra (Public Service) Committee the inadequate provision for bus transport made for residents of Reid (South Ainslie) according to the new bus timetable.*

*An examination of the time table shows that on week days, calls will be made at the Methodist Church Corner at the following times -*

<i>From Ainslie</i>	<i>To Ainslie</i>
<i>a.m.</i>	<i>a.m.</i>
8.41	7.21
8.45	7.58
	8.20
	8.22
	11.38
<i>p.m.</i>	<i>pm</i>
12.49	1.11
1.16	1.13
1.45	1.34
1.46	3.21
5.4	5.2
5.17	
5.18	

*X 11.19 Mon, Wed and Saturday only.*

*It will be noted that no facilities are provided for women who are unfortunate enough to reside in the district, and who wish to visit shops at either Melbourne Buildings or Kingston during the morning or afternoon and especially on Friday evening, when many go to Kingston shops for supplies. It necessitates an additional was of another quarter mile from Methodist Church to Gorman House.*

*Should residents of Kingston or Forrest desire to visit friends at Reid, during the evening, again Gorman House is the nearest point at which buses pass. Why this should be so is difficult to understand, as Reid has a fairly large population which has been hoping that the new bus service would make things easier for the womenfolk who are compelled to trudge long distances over very rough roads whenever they wish to shop or visit friends.*

*On the other hand North Ainslie residents have a frequent bus service throughout the day which actually passes shops at both centres. We suggest that representations be made to the Federal Capital Commission to provide buses from Ainslie calling at the Methodist Church at say 11 am, 3 pm, 7.30 pm and 11.30 pm and on Fridays only at 6.34pm.*

*Buses to Ainslie should call at the Methodist Church say at 12.30pm, 8 pm, and the last bus at 11.5 pm and on Fridays only at 8.50 pm. The suggested additions are all based on times at which buses are actually due at Gorman House and the slight deviation necessary to call at the Methodist Church would take about two minutes only...*