



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Transport
and City Services

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the effectiveness of Fix My Street

Submission number: 055

Submitter: Advocacy for Inclusion

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Standing Committee on Transport and City Services
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Via email: LACommitteeTransport@parliament.act.gov.au

Inquiry into the effectiveness of Fix My Street

Dear Standing Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry. While Fix My Street has represented a tool for community-responsive infrastructure maintenance, significant barriers remain for people with disability in accessing and benefiting from this system and it is no longer sufficient or fit for purpose.

Our submission highlights the need for proactive, systemic approaches to accessibility rather than reactive complaint-based models that place an undue burden on those already facing infrastructure barriers.

About us

Advocacy for Inclusion (AFI) is an independent organisation delivering reputable national systemic advocacy informed by our experience in individual advocacy and community and government consultation. We provide dedicated individual and self-advocacy services, training, information and resources in the ACT.

Advocacy for Inclusion (AFI) is an independent organisation delivering reputable national systemic advocacy informed by our experience in individual advocacy and community and government consultation. We provide dedicated individual and self-advocacy services, training, information and resources in the ACT. We are the peak body for people with disability in the ACT and convene the ACT Disability Directed Advocacy Caucus which also includes Women with Disabilities ACT and ACT Down Syndrome and Intellectual Disability.

As a Disabled People's Organisation, the majority of our organisation, including our Board of Management, staff and members, are people with disabilities. AFI speaks with lived experience and is committed to advancing opportunities for the insights of people with disability to be heard and acknowledged.

Summary

Our submission focusses on the need for proactive infrastructure management and pathways to early identification and resolution of access issues before they require a snap and send model of reporting.

We have been part of the Living Streets submission and we endorse their submission including comments about the limited utility of the current Fix My Street program. They also endorse this submission and our submissions should be read in tandem

We agree that the ACT Government needs to shift from the inconvenient, piecemeal approach offered by Fix My Street to a more systematic, transparent, cost-effective and universal approach to maintaining and upgrading ACT infrastructure. We also think there should be an asset renewal system and a publicly available real-time map with quality information about accessibility.

We think there needs to be a continuous rolling and regular program of stocktake and audit which flows into improvement and asset protection work on the ground.

AFI also advocates for reform and a boost to municipal consultation remit and capability to ensure these issues can also be picked up in the advocacy of the Community Councils.

We would prefer an easily useable mobile App as well as a human service which people can interact with who are not able to use smartphones or manage online. We note that the ACT had a service, called the Access City hotline, which historically fulfilled some of these requirements.

Key Recommendations

1. Shift from Reactive to Proactive Infrastructure Management

The current Fix My Street model unfairly places the burden on people with disability to identify and report barriers that exclude them from community participation. Those who face the greatest barriers to mobility are expected to navigate reporting systems to advocate for their basic access rights.

We recommend systematic auditing to proactively identify accessibility black spots, particularly at high-impact locations such as:

- Transport hubs and bus stops with inaccessible pathways
- Shopping centres and medical facilities with poor connectivity
- Community facilities lacking accessible parking or entrance routes
- High-traffic pedestrian corridors with missing kerb cuts or audio signals.

Response times for accessibility issues must be prioritised. When a footpath is impassable for wheelchair users or a pedestrian crossing lacks audio signals, entire community members are cut off from participating in civic life. These barriers don't merely inconvenience – they exclude.

We agree with the Living Streets submission proposals for a proactive approach. This includes stocktake and audit, mapping, asset renewal focus and targeted investment to improve and refresh public street and urban assets.

2. Strengthen Community Council Capacity and Representation

Community councils represent a crucial link between local communities and territorial government, yet current resourcing appears inadequate for meaningful engagement with disability communities on infrastructure priorities. Enhanced resourcing should include:

- Dedicated funding for accessibility consultations and community forums
- Training for council members on disability access requirements and universal design principles
- Structured partnerships with local disability organisations.

Critically, disability representation on community councils must be improved. Current representation does not reflect either the proportion of ACT residents with disability or the expertise needed to identify accessibility barriers before they become entrenched problems.

This could entail reserved positions for people with disability, support for accessible participation (including meeting formats and reasonable adjustments), and recognition of lived experience as valuable expertise in infrastructure planning.

We think there needs to be a curated and triaged approach to infrastructure improvement which is informed by municipal wisdom and local knowledge with an improved disability and ageing lens.

For instance, if the choice is between improving a piece of street or bike path infrastructure in an open space or fixing a piece of bike path that enables a path of travel out of an aged care village then the latter should be prioritised.

3. Bridge the Gap Between Strategic Oversight and Local Implementation

The Transport and City Services Committee's high-level focus may inadvertently abstract decision-making from local accessibility impacts. While strategic oversight is important, gaps can emerge between policy intent and on-ground implementation.

We recommend establishing mechanisms to bridge this gap, including:

- Regular community accessibility audits informing committee work
- Structured feedback loops from community councils to territorial committees
- Direct pathways for disability community input into infrastructure planning and maintenance priorities

The current reactive model means people with disability often face months or years of exclusion while waiting for barriers to be identified, reported, prioritised, and addressed.

Conclusion

Fix My Street has been a valuable community engagement tool, but it's no longer fit for purpose and cannot substitute for proactive, systematic approaches to accessible infrastructure.

There are more timely and easier to use digital solutions and there is also a need to have human centred ways of surfacing problems.

True effectiveness requires shifting from a complaint-based system to a prevention-focused approach that recognises accessibility as a fundamental infrastructure requirement. Early intervention in accessibility planning is both more effective and cost-efficient than retrofitting barriers after they exclude community members.

It is not reasonable to expect people with disabilities to be eternal watchers and reporters of poor, inaccessible and decaying infrastructure. This imposes a cost and unreasonable lifelong burden on people who are already under stress and managing demands in other areas of their lives like accessing basic services, trying to manage the NDIS and overcoming endemic discrimination.

We urge the Committee to recommend structural changes that place accessibility at the centre of infrastructure planning and maintenance, rather than relegating it to an afterthought requiring community advocacy to address.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me on 0477 200 755 or craig@advocacyforinclusion.org to discuss this submission. We would welcome the opportunity to speak to these issues at a hearing.

Regards,



Craig Wallace
Head of Policy
Advocacy for Inclusion

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