



## Belconnen Community Council

Building a stronger community

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Chair  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
Budget Estimates Committee

### Belconnen Community Council Opening Statement – Estimates Hearing 15 June 2018

The Belconnen Community Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on this year's budget outcomes and thanks the committee for the opportunity to hear from the people of Belconnen.

The 2018-19 Budget has provided significant amenity and funding for infrastructure that is greatly needed in the Belconnen district. Our budget submission which was provided to the Chief Minister and Treasurer in February, was warmly received by all Ginninderra and Yerrabi MLAs who spoke with us. It represents the important social and community values the people of Belconnen want to see from their government. Additionally it provides some enduring infrastructure that binds and secures our future as the "Jewel in Canberra's Crown".

Our roadways have been in dire need of upgrading to protect and ensure the safety of road users, cyclists and pedestrians in our suburbs. The burgeoning suburbs to our northern and southern borders are of great concern to our residents and business owners in relation to the pressure on current resources such as schools, shops, parking, playgrounds and green spaces. The excellent work done by our former Chair, Ms Tara Cheyne, has cemented those needs in the minds of government; that many of those have been delivered on in this budget is not lost on us. Similarly, the duplication of William Slim Drive and the increased amenity this will bring to our people in Giralang and Kaleen is, in our view, due to the work done by Ms Suzanne Orr over a number of years to highlight the need for better connections between Gungahlin and Belconnen through this busy corridor. Our Deputy Chair, Mr Damien Haas has also campaigned long and hard on this issue and it is a testament to their efforts that we have a result in 2018 rather than a date in the future. We thank the government for hearing our concerns on roads and the safety of our people, but feel there is more to be done. As we grow toward 500,000 Canberrans, the demand on land and infrastructure will become greater and the BCC have outlined our vision for Belconnen's immediate and future needs. We value the governments support and will continue to talk with government to ensure we convey our district's needs to maintain and improve the amenity for our current residents and businesses. This will be an increasing challenge given the expansion to our south-west at Ginninderry and West Belconnen, as well as the possible infill of the Ginninderra Field Station in the north.

In relation to health services, tomorrow marks the opening of the UC Hospital. This facility will deliver benefits not just for the good people of Belconnen but also those in the territory more broadly. The government's commitment to improving emergency services at Calvary Hospital, the investment of Moran Health to offset aged and specialty care services in the UC precinct and more childcare places puts Belconnen in an enviable position; yet there is more to do in health services and a 25 year contract of services that should be the business of government is but one.

Transport options for our district rated highly in our people's feedback over the last four years. We previously missed out on a number of network upgrades however in 2018-19, we hope (I hope, as an old Transport Officer) we can positively influence change. We have a network consultation process about to commence, with the excess bus hours being made available with the on-lining of the light rail network we think this is the perfect opportunity to make changes in our district and in particular West Belconnen. If people continue to have to drive to and from work rather than take advantage of an enhanced bus network, we have failed on the government's target to reduce emissions and promote active travel.

We salute the government on the Belconnen Bikeway project, it picks up on our request to revive the old Busway and provide community facility. The flexibility of the stakeholders to take on the community's concerns about the route and need to build a facility behind the Belconnen Arts Centre has been embraced by government and delivered in this budget. We will have a purpose built facility that connects our district, town centre and centres of excellence like no other in the territory; we believe this is highly commendable.

Finally, I'd like to make mention of the increased public amenity of the upgrading of the Higgins Ovals. This will bring the western suburbs of Belconnen greater facility and amenity and as Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry said "We can't wait for a decision on the Kippax Group Centre proposal, so I want to commit us to improving sporting amenity here in Higgins".

We look forward to assisting government and the Belconnen Community to progress the issues that are important to the Belconnen residents and business owners in the years to come and thank the committee for its indulgence.

Regards

Glen Hyde

Chair, Belconnen Community Council

15 June 2018