



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

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To Members of the Standing Committee on Environment, Planning, Transport and City Services

Via email LACommitteeTransport@parliament.act.gov.au

Closing date 22 August 2025

Council on the Ageing ACT (COTA ACT) is pleased to provide this submission to the Committee's inquiry into the effectiveness of Fix My Street.

COTA ACT is a local organisation working to improve the lives of older people in the Canberra community. We work with older people, their families and friends, community organisations, businesses, and government to identify gaps and implement services and programs to encourage older people to participate in the community and contribute to their fullest. You can find out more at <https://cotaact.org.au/>

All ACT residents are rightly concerned with the maintenance and upkeep of the local facilities, including the timeliness and quality of repairs. For older Canberrans, this can be particularly relevant, for example:

- walking the streets mean they may encounter unsafe **footpath** conditions which may prompt them to reduce their outdoor exercise;
- concerns about walking at night in areas with poor or broken **lighting**;
- concerns about the look and feel of the city: seniors generally want to feel pride in their neighbourhoods (for example **long grass**, damaged or **graffitied** signage, illegal dumping and **littering**); and
- like other Canberrans, seniors are very concerned about **potholes** and the damage that can be done to their cars, as well as deeply concerning for those with musculoskeletal issues.

To inform this submission, COTA ACT undertook a simple and brief member survey to provide us with up-to-date, real-life input on this topic. The figures reflect the responses received, and in some cases, direct quotes from COTA ACT members have been included verbatim.

While the majority of comments indicated problems and dissatisfaction with Fix My Street and the timelessness of getting issues addressed, there were also success stories and positive comments which should be acknowledged. In many cases, COTA ACT is aware of the hard work of Directorate staff and contractors and grateful for their attention to the issues raised.

“It was a lot of work setting up a user id and giving information to become a valid user. The reporting of the problem was then a bit tricky but I eventually got it done. They came and fixed it within 7 business days as promised.”

User friendliness of Fix My Street

Some potential users report frustration with the registration process when they just want to quickly report an issue and are not happy having to provide their personal details. In an era of data breaches we constantly urge older Canberrans to be careful about giving out personal information.

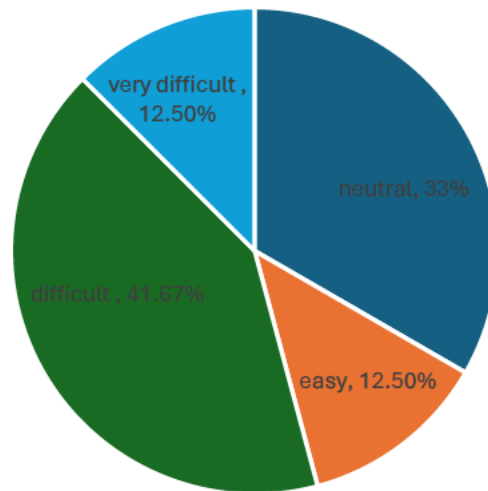
‘I’ve given up on fix my street. When I did eventually figure out how to report an issue via their Byzantine process, it wouldn’t let me log in; and I am computer literate so don’t let them get away with blaming the issue on that. Only resolved when I contacted Tara Cheyne. And why do I need a password to report anything? Its a hopeless bureaucratic process currently.’

“My issue with storm water run-off was fixed promptly, and a longer term solution is in the works. But I also have an issue with a large, dead 25 year old gum tree in the rear of a neighbouring yard in our our Section in O’Connor. I would like advice and information about this. Access Canberra gave me a number for the tree section, but no one ever, in four months, answers the phone. I know it’s not a Fix-My-Street problem, and the current on-line form doesn’t allow the freedom to ask for assistance.”

“At one stage there was not sufficient space in the box (eg only maybe 250 characters) to explain the problem . I do not want to have an account with a password- I just want to be able to report with or without my contact details as I used to.”

More than half of the respondents to our survey found using Fix My Street difficult or very difficult.

How easy did you find using Fix My Street?



■ neutral ■ easy ■ difficult ■ very difficult

Responsiveness to complaints/requests and time taken

Communication is an issue we often hear about with some people who make complaints feeling surprised when their complaint is marked as closed, yet they can see the issue still exists and they have received no communication about why the issue has been closed.

Timeliness is also frequently cited as an issue. One area where this is remarked upon is footpath repairs, where often a damaged footpath is marked with paint. The repairs take so long that often it gets re-marked with fresh paint, before any fix takes place.

“I have lodged numerous issues over many years, the vast majority of which have remained unresolved. I have found the current system to be unsatisfactory.”

“Usually, when I submit an issue on Fix My Street it is closed relatively quickly in the system but the issue might not be resolved for weeks after (or longer)”

“Tree trimming was never completed despite a reminder to ACT Gov and their assurance it would be “

“Been waiting 4 months for the streetlight outside my house to be fixed. Have put in multiple requests but have had zero response!!”

Goodness! It’s ages ago and I gave up because there was such a backlog!”

“We have had a very large branch break off a large gum tree in [REDACTED], Waramanga. Together with a neighbour I assisted in clearing the branches and rubbish off the road. This happened a couple of weeks after I had contacted the ACT Govt through the Fix My Street portal to notify them of a very large branch still overhanging [REDACTED]. This incident occurred a couple of weeks after I had (eventually been able to work out how to) contact Fix My Street and notify them of a large and overhanging Brittle Gum branch still overhanging the street. I also was fortunate in getting onto Chief Ministers' Talkback on the ABC, raising the problem and [sic] the danger. To date nothing has been done. Sigh...”

“I lodged an issue (street light not working) in September 2024 and the issue still has not been fixed despite two follow-up phone calls.”

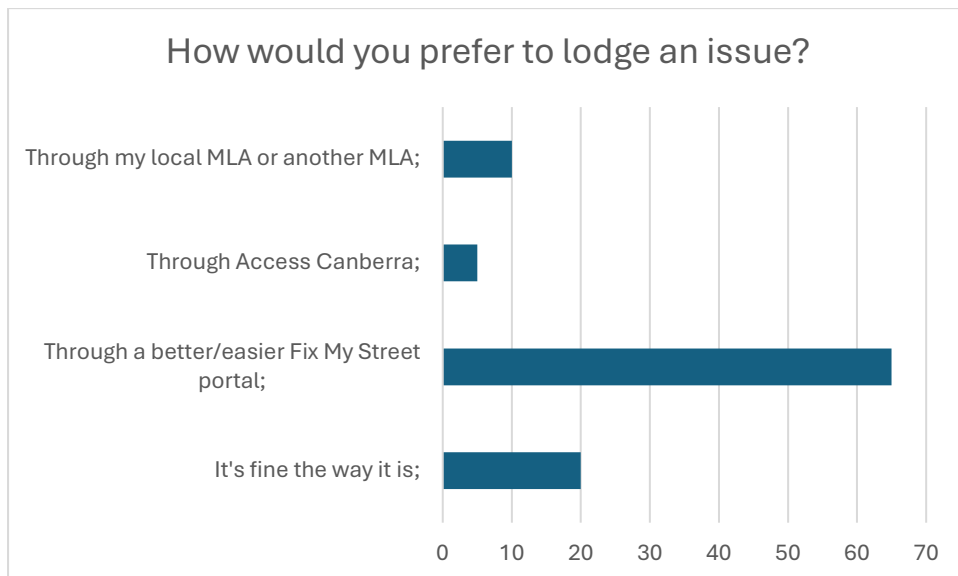
Impact of failure to act on requests/complaints

It hardly needs to be stated that older Canberrans may be at risk of falls, so timely remediation of footpath or other issues is important.

“I have been told it is not a priority but we have elderly walking in wet grass or stumbling over broken footpaths to get to the bus”

Possible implementation of an App

While this seems logical and useful in this day and age, especially if you are of an age to be in the workforce, for some users this will still not be suitable.



Conclusion

Many older Canberrans are confident computer and app users, but not everyone. It is important that no “one size fits all” solution is implemented.

Not for the first time, COTA ACT would like to point out in the strongest possible terms that while many seniors use online tools and are quite confident with these, this is not universal. Not all seniors have a computer, use a computer, or want to submit their complaints/requests via computer for a range of reasons. We believe that equity would demand that seniors in Canberra are given the same opportunities to make complaints/requests about local maintenance issues as digital natives and should not be penalised because they can not or do not use a computer or device.

Recommendation: Alternative reporting/complaints methods be accepted, even welcomed by the ACT Government. These alternative methods are promoted through seniors organisations.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jenny Mobbs

CEO,

COTA ACT



date