



**Legislative Assembly** for the  
**Australian Capital Territory**

Standing Committee on Transport  
and City Services

# Submission Cover Sheet

## Inquiry into the provision of municipal services in Canberra

Submission number: 015

Submitter: Murrumbidgee Greens, ACT Green

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# Improving Municipal Services

*A Murrumbidgee Greens' submission, endorsed by the ACT Greens, to the ACT Assembly's inquiry into the provision of municipal services in Canberra.*



December 2025

## Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Standing Committee on transport and City Services inquiry into the provision of municipal services in the Australian Capital Territory.

The ACT Greens Murrumbidgee Neighbourhood Team has been formed to represent the interests of people residing in the Murrumbidgee Electorate and comprises Greens members and other interested residents. The focus is on how to make Murrumbidgee a better place to live, sustainably.

Providing, and effectively managing, suitable services and facilities in the Territory is vital to ensuring the ACT is a safe and well-equipped place to live, work and play. It is the Government's responsibility to provide sustainable places to help people keep moving, be active, and be connected.

We offer the following comments against the terms of reference.

### **a) The maintenance and upkeep of public spaces such as playgrounds, sportsgrounds, local shops, and waterways.**

Canberrans enjoy their green spaces and actively participate in a wide range of sports and activities. To support outdoor pursuits and provide a healthy environment, we believe that the Western Edge area bordered by the Murrumbidgee River from Belconnen, Molonglo, Weston Creek and Tuggeranong, should be protected. The Western Edge is a beautiful area of critically endangered ecosystems that is home to many rare plants and animals. It also acts as a protective buffer for residents from bushfires and extreme weather. This important Waterway should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations. As residents, we do not see any logical reason for development of this area.

We support the *Sport and Recreation Strategy 2023-2028* in principle but would appreciate clear action and completed projects against its goals. Previously the community completed a comprehensive sports survey, so it could be assumed that this would present useful data to:

- Develop a shared understanding of the priority places and spaces that support the sport and active recreation sector. A sports precinct in the Weston area near the tennis courts would be appropriate. An indoor facility would allow residents to participate in sports in times of high temperatures or poor air quality.
- Develop new and maintain existing sport and recreation places. There are a number of ovals and green spaces that could be reactivated for community use. This includes the Weston and Holder Ovals, and ovals in Mawson. Woden residents have also suggested a new indoor sports facility on the corner of the Mawson playing fields near the junction of

Athlon Drive and Beasley Street, which could also be serviced by an extension to Light Rail Stage 2B.

- Develop suitable facilities for schools. With the issue of microplastics and health concerns, we **do not** support artificial turf for ovals and schools. The planned Molonglo artificial turf ovals should be reconsidered and replaced with natural spaces.
- Better utilise the spaces around sporting facilities through installing rainwater catchment facilities, solar power generation and storage for use in change rooms, canteens and meeting rooms as well as provision of perimeter safe lighting.

Shops and services should be explicitly planned and built early in the construction phase. It has been very concerning that the residents of Molonglo have had to wait years for shops and services. Additionally, many local shops are run down or vacant. Government needs to be far more proactive in monitoring shop leases (for example the Coombs and Duffy shop problems).

- Ensure shops are conveniently located.
- Maintain local shops, for example Fisher shops needs upgrading.
- Exercise Government powers where shop owners are deliberately leaving sites vacant for personal reasons or gain (land banking).

Any Government investment in new infrastructure or maintenance of existing facilities should come with a well publicised long-term plan to maintain, extend or replace facilities. Examples include multi use indoor sports courts, football ovals, local shops, and public swimming pools. Facility installation and expansion needs to be aligned with population projections.

## **b) The appropriateness of the geographic spread of active travel infrastructure, parks and playgrounds.**

Over 60% of the ACT's climate pollution comes from transport. A compact city is a more connected, convenient city. Services that you need should be close by. An unplanned, urban sprawl only succeeds in isolating people and encourages greater car use. Greenfield development is expensive, destroys habitat and increases bushfire risks. Defined city limits need to be set for Canberra so as to develop our suburbs as real communities where everyone can live a fulfilling life in harmony with the local environment. Consideration must be given to:

- Set an urban growth boundary and stop bulldozing acres of land for development.
- Encourage suitable densification along travel corridors such as the light rail and extend this to Mawson and beyond.
- Ensure everyone has access to a nearby park or garden for health and wellbeing.
- Each neighbourhood needs suitable shelter from adverse natural disaster and climatic events.

Travel infrastructure should enable every Canberran to get to their destination easily and affordably. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Local paths are more likely to be uneven, cracked or missing altogether. This makes walking and cycling unsafe and in turn discourages commuters from connecting with public transport. Some simple steps could include:

- A reliable portal for reporting information and/or maintenance with follow up timely feedback.
- A coordinated approach to ensure the appropriate team is allocated to infrastructure maintenance jobs.
- Crossing supervisors at school crossings.

### **c) The effectiveness of services related to waste removal.**

Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) collection reduces landfill waste, lowers methane emissions, and supports a circular economy. All of which is beneficial for the environment. It is therefore disappointing that this scheme has not been rolled out beyond limited parts of Belconnen and Tuggeranong. Suggestions:

- Government to deliver a smaller decentralised composting network instead of the planned large-scale composter that has been delayed. This smaller option would also be cheaper.
- Implement fast fashion recycling.
- Support reuse and repair programs.
- Support sharing economies such as tool sharing and buy nothing groups.

### **d) The effectiveness of policies relating to street art and graffiti removal.**

After offensive graffiti is reported the Government will have it removed if it is on public property. This is not the case for private residences and business owners. Clean up support from the Government would be useful, particularly offensive graffiti.

- Having an artist in residence in schools and libraries would provide meaningful employment and opportunities for young people to engage with artists.
- Continue street art programs. For example, Canberra bus shelters provide relief from the sun and heat and can also be a good canvas for community art projects.

### **e) Benchmarking ACT performance against similar jurisdictions of each of the items listed a-d.**

FOGO council programs in the Illawarra NSW would be informative to explore for adoption in the ACT. Wollongong City Council has emerged as a national leader in waste management. They also

have a Waste and Recovery Strategy 2024-2034. Some examples to consider from the Wollongong experience:

- Partnership with Universities. University of Wollongong has deployed a free to air network. They monitor waste bin levels, sensor equipped lids and camera activation in dumping hot spots.
- Set up a waste app.
- Investigation of FOGO chutes in new multi-unit buildings.
- Free liner rolls and caddies for resident collection at a variety of locations, including libraries. They are also available for purchase at supermarkets and hardware stores.
- FOGO local experts are available for advice.
- Guidelines are accessible online.

An impressive goal to aim for can be seen in Sweden. In Sweden 99% of garbage is recycled. This is achieved by residents sorting garbage, convenient collection points and specialised recycling systems for electronics, tyres and batteries.

#### **f) Any other related matters.**

There continues to be missed opportunities to improve sports participation rates, increase community programs or improve infrastructure. The biggest barrier appears to be funding. Big industry should pay it forward and contribute. This could include:

- Work site-based activities
- Sponsorships