



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

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Submission to the Standing Committee on Transport and City Services

Inquiry into the Provision of Municipal Services in the ACT

Submitted by:

Mr. Ravi Krishnamurthy

President, Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN)

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Contact: [REDACTED] / Mobile: [REDACTED]

1. Introduction

The Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Standing Committee’s inquiry into municipal services in the ACT. AMAN represents culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities across Canberra, advocating for inclusion, equitable access, and cultural harmony in all aspects of civic life.

As Canberra grows, it is essential that municipal services evolve in a way that reflects our diversity — not only in language and culture but also in social and environmental needs. The way our public spaces are maintained, designed, and accessed deeply influences belonging, wellbeing, and the sense of pride residents feel for their city.

2. Equity in Access to Municipal Services

Municipal services — including waste collection, public space maintenance, and active travel infrastructure — must reach all corners of our city, not only the central or newer suburbs. Communities in older or lower-income areas often experience delayed maintenance or inconsistent service delivery.

Recommendations:

- Introduce **equity-based service mapping**, ensuring regular review of suburb-level service data to prevent geographic disadvantage.
 - Establish a **“Community Voice in Maintenance” program**, where residents can co-design improvement priorities with Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS).
 - Publish **multilingual service dashboards** to make reporting and follow-ups accessible to all residents, regardless of English proficiency.
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3. Cultural Inclusion in Public Spaces

Canberra’s public parks, verges, and community spaces should reflect the diversity of its people. Too often, cultural representation in design, naming, or usage policies is minimal.

Recommendations:

- Commission **multicultural urban art and design projects** that celebrate the stories and heritage of CALD residents.
 - Pilot **“Harmony Gardens”** in select suburbs — shared public spaces that combine native vegetation with community-driven plantings symbolising global cultures.
 - Ensure **community events in parks** have streamlined permits and inclusive signage to encourage participation by new migrants and seniors.
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4. Waste Management and Environmental Stewardship

Waste removal services and environmental maintenance play a crucial role in both sustainability and community pride. Many CALD residents, including seniors, express uncertainty about recycling rules or bulky waste schedules due to language barriers.

Recommendations:

- Translate **recycling and waste management information** into major community languages and promote through multicultural radio and local community hubs.
 - Introduce **community “Clean-Up Partnerships”** involving schools, faith groups, and associations to take ownership of local cleanliness.
 - Expand **Fix My Street** outreach to CALD groups with easy-read and visual guides for reporting issues.
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5. Public Art, Graffiti, and Civic Expression

The management of street art and graffiti should balance civic pride with creative expression. While vandalism needs to be addressed, the city should also encourage legitimate community-driven art that adds vibrancy and cultural narrative to public spaces.

Recommendations:

- Develop a **Community Street Art Program** allowing registered groups to propose murals or temporary art reflecting community identity.

- Partner with youth and multicultural organisations to **convert graffiti hotspots** into curated community canvases.
 - Maintain a **rapid-response but respectful removal policy**, differentiating between vandalism and community art.
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6. Benchmarking and Transparency

Benchmarking Canberra’s municipal services against comparable jurisdictions is commendable, but success should not only be measured by efficiency — it must also include *community satisfaction, inclusion, and cultural accessibility*.

Recommendations:

- Incorporate **multicultural participation indicators** into performance frameworks.
 - Publicly release **annual “Civic Inclusion Reports”**, tracking community engagement, language accessibility, and representation in municipal planning.
 - Use **community ambassadors** to bridge communication between CALD residents and TCCS officers.
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7. Community Engagement and Trust

The inquiry’s emphasis on listening to residents’ lived experiences is strongly supported. However, engagement efforts must go beyond surveys and town halls, which often fail to reach migrant and refugee communities due to limited language support or unfamiliarity with government processes.

Recommendations:

- Adopt **face-to-face outreach sessions** in partnership with community organisations such as AMAN, Companion House, and MRC.
 - Provide **interpreters and cultural facilitators** at consultation events.
 - Ensure **digital engagement tools** (like Fix My Street) are user-friendly across languages, literacy levels, and device types.
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8. Conclusion

Municipal services are more than maintenance systems — they are a reflection of how deeply we care for every member of our community. By embedding inclusion,

transparency, and shared stewardship, Canberra can set a national benchmark for an equitable and multicultural capital city.

AMAN stands ready to collaborate with the Committee, providing insights from multicultural residents and assisting in pilot initiatives that strengthen trust and participation.

Kind regards,
Ravi Krishnamurthy