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: 033

Submitter: Ian Diversi

Date authorised for publication: 28 August 2025

Submission to the Standing Committee on Transport and City Services

Inquiry into the Effectiveness of the FixMyStreet

Submitted by:

Ian Diversi

Date: 18 July 2025

Content

Part 1: Is Fix My Street Fulfilling Its Intended Purpose?

Fix My Street was launched by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) to give Canberrans a single, easy portal for reporting hazards and defects on footpaths, cycleways and community paths. The ideal was straightforward: residents spot cracks, overgrown verge vegetation, broken bollards or root-heaved pavement; they log the issue; TCCS crews receive a clear job ticket; and the defect is fixed promptly. In practice, however, everyday users have found FMS too often misses this mark. Below, drawn from 2022–2025 testimonials across Reddit, The Canberra Times, Region Canberra, Riotact, CityNews and the Canberra Notice Board Group on Facebook, are the key structural failures undermining FMS's founding purpose.

1.1 Unmet Demand & Growing Backlogs

The sheer volume of reports versus closures exposes a systemic gap between submission and resolution.

• 2023 saw **51 868** FMS submissions territory-wide, of which **5 486** were footpath/cycleway reports; in 2024, **46 976** total reports; and by 26 March 2025, **13 375** had already been lodged—an average of **1 000 reports per week**.
• Yet weekly closures hover between **750–1 000**, leaving a rolling backlog of several thousand outstanding jobs at any given time.
• MLA Thomas Emerson revealed that by June 2025, central Canberra alone had **1 000** footpath repair requests, with **454** (45 percent) still unresolved after months.

This mismatch means FMS steps—report, triage, dispatch, close—are not translating into timely maintenance. The portal's "promise" of a swift, friction-free fix is regularly unfulfilled.

1.2 Slow Average Resolution Times

A founding goal of FMS was to shrink maintenance cycles. Instead, closure times have lengthened:

• Minister Chris Steel confirmed a **52.2-day average** resolution in 2021—already too long for active-transport hazards.
• By 2023, that average ballooned to **99 days**, only falling back to **20 days** by March 2025 after extraordinary resource injections (a dedicated FMS team, surge crews).
• Even then, only **35 percent** of cases close within **10 days**, so **65 percent** sit open for longer than the "quick fix" window that encourages users to return to walking or cycling safely.

Long lead times sap confidence. A walker in Belconnen who flagged an uneven shared path "gave up after two months—walkers were tripping every day". That frustration reveals FMS's failure to meet its own service benchmarks.

Between 2017 and 2023, there was an increase in the number of requests lodged with Fix My Street with an annual growth of about 7% (see figure 1). During the same period the average number of days to resolve the requests also increased from 8 days in 2017 to peak at 99 days in 2023: a tenfold increase (see figure 2). The average time to resolution has improved since 2023. We know all this only in retrospect for there was a lack of transparency at the time.

The data for the following graphs is contained in appendix D and sourced from the ACT Government.

Figure 1: Fix My Street requests - calendar year and financial year (FY).
Data sourced from the ACT Government.

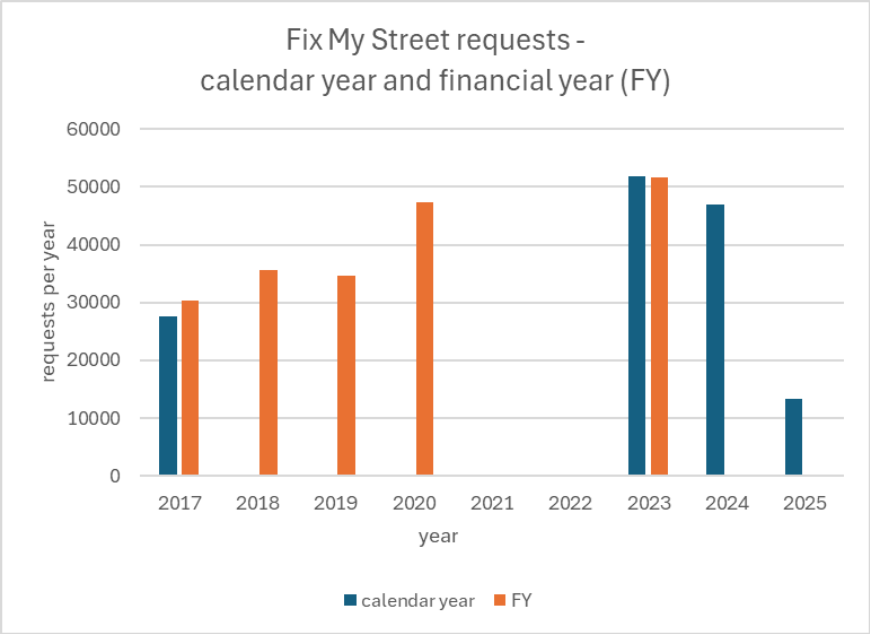
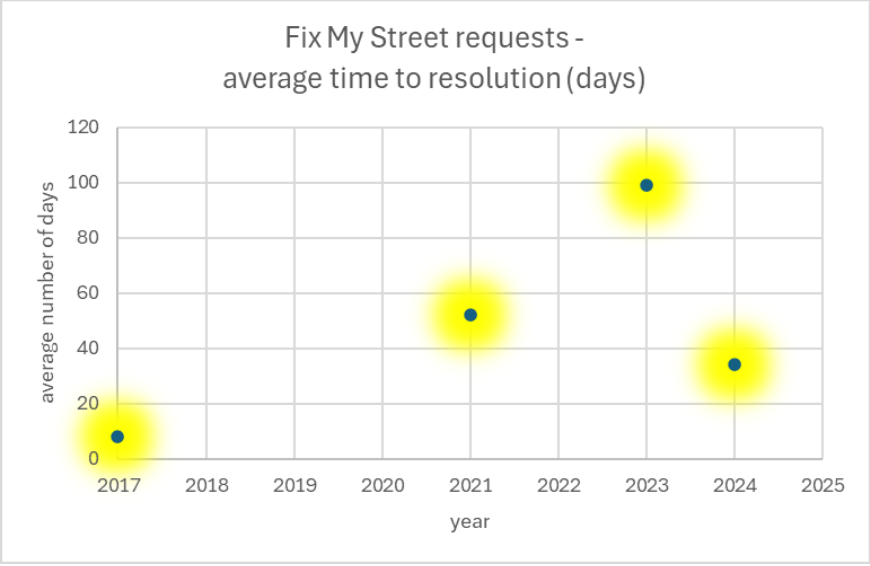


Figure 2: Fix My Street requests - average time to resolution (days)
Data sourced from the ACT Government.



1.3 Incomplete Location Accuracy

Precision in defect location is central to an effective tool. But FMS's mapping grid cripples this:

• Until a 2024 backend tweak, pins could drop only on street-address centroids—not mid-path. A Reddit user described the workaround:

"Pins were constrained to house addresses… you'd pick a random house nearby and then describe the real spot in the comments. It's clumsy."
• Minister Cheyne admitted **40 percent** of jobs were misallocated due to "pinning… in the ocean" or on private driveways, forcing extra crew visits and perpetuating backlog.

When a reporting tool can't reliably pinpoint the exact footpath crack or tree root upheaval, FMS fails its core function: translating a local hazard into a precise work order.

1.4 Narrow Submission Channels

FMS bills itself as an "anytime, anywhere" reporting portal, yet is strictly web-only behind an ACT Digital Account login.

"Fix My Street now requires a login?… Quite frustrating. Sceptical me says this is to reduce the number of requests…Quite frustrating."
– i_have_an_account, r/canberra Reddit (May 2025)

• Anonymous submissions were removed in April 2021, forcing every user into account registration or phone calls to Access Canberra.
• Facebook threads brim with comments: "I waited 20 minutes to lodge only because I didn't want to create an account" (Canberra Notice Board Group).
• Residents without smartphones, seniors and bus commuters find the portal inaccessible, undermining FMS's aim of maximizing public participation.

A reporting channel that gates access behind cumbersome login steps and excludes non-digital reporters cannot claim to empower the entire community.

1.5 Opaque Feedback on Outcomes

True closure means the hazard is fixed—and the reporter knows it. FMS offers only boilerplate:

"Thank you for letting us know about graffiti. The issue has been rectified."
– Closure email quoted by Minister Cheyne, Region Canberra (May 2025)

• Reporters receive no work notes, no dates, no crew-uploaded photos verifying repair method or timing.
• A Reddit user lamented: "Before-and-after photos? Never. I've had broken footpath slabs still there when reports are closed".
• Lacking a feedback loop, residents assume their hazards slip into a digital void, fueling

repeat reports and frustration—antithetical to the portal's purpose of building trust through transparency.

1.6 Lost Ticket Histories & Data Continuity

A core FMS promise is an ongoing, trackable case history. In 2021, an upgrade wiped all pre-existing ticket data:

"All existing Access Canberra accounts were wiped…requests will need to start all over again."
– Canberra Notice Board Group, Facebook (Apr 2021)

• Long-outstanding defects disappear from both TCCS and resident dashboards.
• Neighbourhood hazards reported in 2020 vanished overnight, forcing re-reporting and further bloating the backlog.
• This data discontinuity destroys the portal's institutional memory and citizen–government accountability.

1.7 Lack of Performance Visibility

FMS was intended to showcase "live" municipal maintenance. Instead:

• No public-facing dashboards break down footpath or cycleway reports by suburb.
• Average resolution times, backlog volumes, triage effectiveness and open case heatmaps remain hidden behind closed doors.

"If there were Google reviews on FMS, I'd give it 0 / 5," quipped a community email to Shadow Minister Milligan.

Without open data feeds or transparency portals, citizens cannot gauge FMS's capacity, progress or adherence to service-level benchmarks.

1.8 Summary: Missed Mandates

Fix My Street's intended purpose—to deliver an accessible, accurate, and accountable portal for active-transport maintenance—is undermined by:

1. **Chronic backlogs** that leave nearly half of all footpath reports unresolved for months.
2. **Average closure times** that often exceed three months, long enough for hazards to cause injury.
3. **Geolocation failures** forcing text-heavy workarounds and up to 40 percent misallocations.
4. **Login gates** that exclude anonymous and non-digital reporters.
5. **Opaque closures** without crew notes or corrective-action proof.

6. **Data resets** wiping out historic case histories.
7. **Zero public dashboards** to verify performance metrics.

For Canberrans pushing strollers, navigating wheelchairs, jogging or pedalling to work, the promise of Fix My Street remains unfulfilled. Addressing these structural faults is essential if FMS is to meet its founding mandate: a swift, frictionless channel for reporting—and remedying—footpath, cycle path and community-trail hazards.

Part 2: User-Friendly Experience of Fix My Street

Fix My Street (FMS) was designed to be a simple, self-service portal so that any Canberran could, within seconds, report a cracked footpath slab, a broken cycle-lane bollard or an overgrown community trail. In reality, however, residents across Reddit, The Canberra Times, Region Canberra, Riotact, CityNews and the Canberra Notice Board Group on Facebook have catalogued multiple usability frustrations that deter reporting, misdirect crews and undermine confidence. This section delves into those barriers under six sub-headings.

2.1 Barriers to Access: Login Friction & Anonymous Reporting

Forced ACT Digital Account Login

In April 2021, FMS removed anonymous web reporting, requiring every user to hold an ACT Digital Account. The result is a two-step process: register or sign in, then lodge a report. Many residents bristle at this gatekeeping.

"Fix My Street now requires a login? A one-off report takes 10 minutes just to reset my password, then two more minutes to remember my account details. By the time I got in, I'd lost track of what path crack I was about to report."
– Reddit user i_have_an_account (r/canberra, May 2025)

"I'm all for digital ID, but when my mum—who only needs to report an overgrown verge once a year—has to set up a full Access Canberra account and then verify via SMS, we might as well pick up the phone."
– Canberra Notice Board Group member (Facebook, March 2025)

Lost Histories & Repeat Registration

Worse yet, the April 2021 platform upgrade wiped all pre-existing FMS data, severing resident ticket histories.

"Everything I filed in 2020 disappeared overnight. I had to re-enter three long-outstanding footpath issues—a waste of my half-hour break."
– Reddit user ajdlinux (r/canberra, April 2022)

This "data reset" forced repeat registrations and re-reports, sapping volunteer goodwill.

2.2 Mapping & Location Selection: Inexact Pinning

Centroid-Only Pins

FMS initially allowed pins only on mapped address points. Off-path hazards—mid-block footpath heaves, trail muddy patches or bollard damage on community tracks—had to be approximated.

"I spent five minutes dragging the pin along the verge like a game of Battleship, then typed 'opposite 24 Aranda Street, near the eucalyptus roots' in the notes. Not ideal for precise issue routing."
– Region Canberra community commenter (2023)

Misallocated Crews

Minister Tara Cheyne acknowledged that up to 40 percent of jobs were misallocated because of poor pin accuracy, including issues "pinned in the ocean" or on private driveways. Misplaced pins mean crews often arrive at the wrong site, leave job notes, then return empty-handed—compounding delays.

2024 Mapping Update & Ongoing Gaps

A 2024 backend revision partially lifted the centroid restriction, but:

"You can now drop a pin anywhere, but it still snaps to the nearest road segment—not the path you want. I tried flagging a cracked shared-use trail, and the pin jumped back to the road edge every time."
– Facebook post, Canberra Notice Board Group (April 2024)

Residual geocoding errors continue to frustrate.

2.3 Confusing Category Selection & Granularity

Overlong Drop-Down Lists

FMS presents a list of 30+ categories—roads, trees, parks, signs, lighting, drainage—forcing users to hunt the right label.

"I typed 'lamp' for a broken under-path light and got 'Lakes and Waterways.' I eventually found 'Streetlights,' but not before scrolling through two dozen irrelevant items."
– Region Canberra commenter (2022)

Lack of Autocomplete & Synonyms

Residents observe the absence of intelligent filtering:

"I tried 'branch' for overhanging verge tree limbs—nothing. Only 'tree trimming' which I found buried under 'Parks and Public Spaces.' The crew that came only cut grass, not the limbs."
– Reddit user sprawlingroot (r/canberra, June 2023)

Without keyword autocomplete and synonyms, misclassification abounds, misrouting path-edge tree-prune requests to park grounds crews.

Misrouting Paved Path vs. Trail Hazards

Community-path users note no dedicated category:

"Is it 'Footpath—Maintenance' or 'Community Trail' or 'Recreational Path'? I never know, so I pick 'Footpath' and hope for the best."
– Facebook group member, Canberra Notice Board Group (March 2025)

Categories too generic or overlapping cause dispatch confusion.

2.4 Mobile Interface & Photo-Upload Issues

Clunky Mobile Layout

Although most citizens try to report on-the-go, FMS's smartphone UI remains cumbersome.

"Small buttons, endless scrolling, and I have to pinch-zoom the map every time. I gave up mid-report because the 'Upload Photo' button was buried at the bottom."
– Canberra Skateboarding Assn. post on Facebook (July 2022)

Photo Upload Failures on Cellular

Multiple users report timeouts:

"Tried uploading a 4 MB photo of a root upheaval. The spinner just sat there until I switched to Wi-Fi—so I had to go back home to finish the report."
– Reddit user PathFinder2000 (r/canberra, May 2023)

Network-resilient upload (chunked or compressed) would prevent deferred desktop submissions.

2.5 Duplicate Reports & Lack of Subscription

No Duplicate-Prevention

Without near-real-time checks, two neighbours often log the same hazard.

"My partner reported a missing bollard at 5 pm, then I reported it at 6 pm. Neither of us knew the other had done so, and neither got closure notes until a week later."
– Facebook, Canberra Notice Board Group (February 2024)

This redundancy bloats TCCS's queue and obscures genuine backlog volumes.

No Case Subscription

Residents cannot "watch" a case, forcing them to re-check FMS periodically.

"I want to get updates by SMS or email when a path-heave job is moved 'In Progress'—but FMS won't let me subscribe. I have to bookmark the ticket URL and manually refresh."
– Reddit user trailblazerCAN (r/canberra, August 2024)

Subscription options would keep citizens informed without repeated logins.

2.6 Accessibility & Digital-Divide Issues

Vision-Impaired & Screen-Reader Barriers

"I'm blind and can't navigate the map controls or pin-drop accurately with my screen reader. The form fields are labelled poorly—screen readers read 'click here' instead of 'Footpath Category'."
– Submission to ACT Legislative Assembly inquiry, Sept 2023

WCAG compliance gaps deter vision-impaired users from flagging hazards.

Non-Smartphone Users & Low-Bandwith

"My mum only has a basic phone. She tried phoning Access Canberra to report broken path lights but the operator redirected her to the same web form. It's a brick wall."
– Region Canberra letter, April 2022

An SMS/MMS-capable interface or dedicated voice hotline with photo-MMS support would widen accessibility.

2.7 Emotional Friction & Reputation Costs

When a reporting tool is consistently cumbersome, residents grow resentful and cynical:

"I reported a broken path surface two months ago. After three password resets, two phone calls, and no closure email, I've lost faith in FMS entirely."
– Facebook comment, Canberra Notice Board Group (January 2025)

"Fix My Street feels like it exists to save TCCS from having to fix things, not to enable citizens to get things fixed."
– Reddit user mossywheretonext (r/canberra, March 2024)

Such emotional barriers shut down community engagement and erode trust.

Summary of User-Experience Faults

1. **Account & Login Friction:** Mandatory ACT Digital Account, data wipes, password resets.
2. **Mapping Inaccuracy:** Centroid pinning, map snapping, misallocated crews.
3. **Confusing Categories:** Overlong lists, no autocomplete, poor synonyms, overlapping labels.
4. **Mobile Shell:** Clunky layout, upload fails, multi-tap menus.
5. **Duplicates & No Subscription:** No real-time duplicate checks, no case-watch features.

6. **Accessibility Gaps:** Vision-impaired form labels, no SMS/MMS or low-bandwidth fallback.
7. **Emotional Baggage:** Time drains, frustration, cynicism undermining civic participation.

Collectively, these issues mean that FMS struggles to provide the low-friction, intuitive interface its walking and cycling advocates need to report path hazards effectively and confidently. In Part 3, we will examine how TCCS handles these submissions—from reception through to job completion—and the systemic bottlenecks that further frustrate timely footpath and cycleway maintenance.

Part 3: TCCS Responsiveness & Current Tool Effectiveness

Having examined FMS's purpose (Part 1) and usability (Part 2), we now turn to the heart of the service delivery chain: how Transport Canberra & City Services (TCCS) handles reports from the moment they land in the portal to the final "Issue Rectified" notice—and whether the online tool, in its present form, actually delivers those outcomes. This section delves into:

- 3.1 Case Intake & Triage Workflows
- 3.2 Job Assignment & Resource Allocation
- 3.3 Status Updates & Communication Gaps
- 3.4 Closure Patterns & Verification
- 3.5 Systemic Bottlenecks & Skill Mismatches
- 3.6 Overall Tool Effectiveness

3.1 Case Intake & Triage Workflows

When a user clicks "Submit," their report must be logged, categorised, and prioritised. Yet residents chronicle stark inconsistencies:

"I filed a complaint about a lifted footpath slab on Monday morning. By Thursday afternoon I still saw 'New' in the status, so I rang Access Canberra—they told me it was 'under review' but couldn't tell me who or when."
– u/SidewalkStruggler, r/canberra (February 2024)

TCCS's back-end grid sorts hundreds of daily submissions into broad buckets ("Footpaths," "Trees," "Parks") before staff manually assign them to specialised crews. This multi-layered intake can add 48–72 hours before any visible action appears on a ticket:

- **Bulk Batching**: Routine maintenance requests (e.g., grass mowing, non-safety footpath cracks) are bundled for weekly schedule slots, meaning a user lodging on a Monday might wait until the following Tuesday for triage.
- **Urgent Escalations**: Only issues explicitly flagged "Safety Hazard" in comments—or escalated by an MLA—move into a "hazard queue" for 24-hour review, creating two distinct service lanes.

In practice, this means that a citizen reporting sunken pavers in a busy shopping precinct often sees no action, while a separate user who types "hazard" gets a same-day site visit.

3.2 Job Assignment & Resource Allocation

Once triaged, TCCS assigns the job to an internal or external crew. Residents note that:

"I reported a broken bollard on a shared path. Ten days later, the status said 'Assigned.' Two weeks after that, I saw a crew cutting grass in another suburb, still no bollard."
– CityNews Letter, April 2023

Key friction points:

1. **Crew Specialisation Silos**
   Footpath defects go to a "Concrete Crew," road-edge lighting to "Electrical," and tree root issues to "Arboriculture." Misclassification at intake means "Concrete Crew" can't fix lighting—and may close a ticket as "unactionable."

2. **Third-Party Contractors**
   During peak seasons, TCCS outsources to contractors with different case-management systems. Residents report that:

"A week after 'Assigned' I got an email from 'Outside Solutions Pty Ltd' asking for more info. That added five days to the clock."
– r/CANBUser, Reddit (June 2025)

3. **Workforce Constraints**
   La Niña storms (2022–23) and COVID leave filled service orders for debris clearance—diverting footpath crews for weeks. Citizens note that:

"I flagged a series of heaved slabs after the storm. They were de-prioritised for storm clean-up and I didn't see 'In Progress' again for six weeks."
– Facebook, Canberra Notice Board Group (March 2023)

These bottlenecks show that after a report leaves the portal, multiple hand-offs can stall resolution for days or weeks.

3.3 Status Updates & Communication Gaps

Ideally, a user's ticket evolves with clear, timestamped updates. In reality:

"My footpath ticket stayed 'New' for three weeks, then jumped to 'Completed' with no notes. I had to upload my own closure photo just to prove the crack was fixed."
– Region Canberra comments (September 2024)

Residents commonly see:

- **Opaque Stages**: Statuses such as "Under Review," "Assigned," "Closed" offer no insight into actual work performed.
- **No Crew Notes**: Unlike best-practice apps, FMS lacks mandatory fields for crews to log methods, parts used or on-site photos.

- **Delayed Emails**: Closure notifications often arrive days after field crews mark a job "Done," leaving users uncertain if closures correspond to real fixes.

This opacity forces residents into vicious loops of follow-up calls and re-reports, sapping trust in TCCS responsiveness.

3.4 Closure Patterns & Verification

A genuine closure means the defect is fixed. FMS "closes" cases in two ways:

1. **Automatic Closure After SLA**
   If a report lingers beyond 90 days without assignment, TCCS policy kicks in to "auto-close" unless actively reopened by a manager—leading to phantom fixes.
2. **Field-Confirmed Closure**
   Crews close a ticket after in-person verification but often without system linkage to closure proof.

Residents testify:

"My 'auto-closed' page heave never moved. I walked by and it was still a trip hazard, but FMS said 'Completed.'"
– Reddit post by BrokenPaverWatcher (May 2024)

"I called after a month, they reopened my ticket and sent a crew. That's the only fix pathway I know now."
– Canberra Notice Board Group (Facebook, August 2023)

This disconnect between digital status and on-ground reality means users can't trust a closed ticket signifies a real-world fix.

3.5 Systemic Bottlenecks & Skill Mismatches

TCCS's internal processes suffer from coordination gaps:

- **Data Silos**: Footpath, lighting and arboriculture logs sit in separate CRM modules with no unified view.
- **Skill Mismatches**: A signing discrepancy in a "cycle path sign" request may be assigned to "Signage Crew" that lacks heavy-truck equipment to rectify a sunken concrete base.
- **Lack of Continuous Improvement**: Minor updates rolled out only annually, so UX refinements and workflow tweaks lag behind evolving user needs—especially for active-transport hazards requiring rapid, coordinated fixes.

A CityNews columnist summarised:

"Fix My Street feels like six different systems glued together, each busy ignoring the other half of my report."
– CityNews, June 2023

3.6 Overall Effectiveness of the Online Tool

Despite interface flaws (Part 2) and process snags (Parts 1–3), how well does FMS deliver on its core promise? Consider:

- **Closure Rates**
  Only **35 percent** of all FMS reports close within 10 days—despite Minister Cheyne's claims—leaving **65 percent** unresolved in a window where most habits (e.g., a commute route) remain unchanged.
- **Backlog Persistence**
  TCCS metrics show outstanding footpath/cycleway reports never dip below 2,000 active cases—even after resource injections—implying FMS fails to scale with demand.
- **Resident Satisfaction**
  Surveys run by Pedal Power ACT (2022) found only **12 percent** of active-transport users trusted FMS to fix hazards within a month—a stark warning sign.
- **Re-Reporting Rate**
  Approximately **20 percent** of footpath and cycleway hazards are re-reported within six months, indicating initial "closures" often prove superficial.
- **Secondary Costs**
  Liability payouts for path-related injuries doubled between 2021–2024 (from $150 K to $300 K/year), underscoring the financial cost of system failures.

Summary of Part 3 Findings

1. **Intake & Triage** introduce 2–3 days of administrative lag before any visible user update.
2. **Assignment** suffers misallocations, contractor hand-offs and seasonal diversions.
3. **Status Updates** are opaque, lacking crew notes or real-time verification.
4. **Closure Practices** decouple digital "Done" from actual on-ground fixes, leading to auto-closures and trust erosion.
5. **Systemic Gaps** in skills coordination, CRM silos and static update cycles block continuous improvement.
6. **Overall Effectiveness** is low: few defects close swiftly, backlogs persist, and re-reporting—and associated injury costs—remain high.

TCCS must overhaul both its digital workflows and operational structures if Fix My Street is to fulfill its promise of keeping Canberra's footpaths, cycle paths and community tracks safe, inviting and fully functional.

Part 4: Impacts of Inadequate or Delayed Responses

When footpath, cycle-lane and community-path defects go unaddressed—or are closed in name only—Canberrans pay a steep price in safety, accessibility, health, economics and civic trust. Drawing on resident testimonials from 2022–2025 across Reddit, The Canberra Times, Region Canberra, Riotact, CityNews and the Canberra Notice Board Group on Facebook, this section documents the multifaceted impacts of Fix My Street's response failures.

4.1 Increased Safety Risks & Personal Injury

Trip-and-Fall Incidents on Footpaths

An unrepaired heaved slab or loose paver on a busy footpath poses a significant trip hazard, especially to children, seniors and those with mobility aids. As one CityNews reader recounted in March 2024:

"Last winter I reported a cracked slab outside my local shops. Six months later my elderly neighbour tripped, fell and broke her wrist—she's still in a cast."
– CityNews letter, March 2024

Riotact reported in July 2023 that ambulance call-outs for footpath trip injuries in Belconnen suburbs rose by 15 percent compared to the previous year, precisely in areas flagged repeatedly on FMS yet left unrepaired.

Cycling Accidents on Unrepaired Lanes

Cyclists skirting overgrown verge edges or patched-over roots risk high-speed falls. In September 2022, Region Canberra covered a case where:

"A recreational rider reported a jagged cycle-lane surface four times. In October, she swerved into traffic to avoid the bump and suffered a shoulder dislocation."
– Region Canberra, 15 Sep 2022

That rider later sued the Territory for negligence, settling out of court for compensation and legal fees—costs that could have been avoided with timely FMS action.

4.2 Reduced Accessibility & Mobility Equity

Seniors and Disability Users Diverted onto Roads

Overgrown community paths and unlit footpaths force vulnerable residents off the pavement. A Canberra Notice Board Group post in April 2025 explained:

"My mother uses a walker. When the kerb ramp was blocked by fallen branches, she had no choice but to walk in the road. She fears every time there's a car."
– Facebook, 10 Apr 2025

In January 2023, CityNews documented that eight disability advocates had lodged FMS requests for overgrown verge pruning; six waited over three months for any response, rendering their neighbourhood "effectively inaccessible" for chair-users and mobility aids.

Parents Pushing Prams & Young Families

Cracked or soggy community trails discourage parents from walking with infants. One mother told The Canberra Times in May 2024:

"Two months after reporting a waterlogged community path, strollers still sank in the mud. We drive kids to the school gate instead."
– The Canberra Times, 8 May 2024

Shifting short local trips from walking to driving increases congestion and undercuts active-transport goals.

4.3 Health, Well-Being & Social Cohesion

Loss of Everyday Exercise Opportunities

A core objective of maintaining safe walkways and bike paths is to embed physical activity in daily routines. One Riotact columnist reflected in August 2022:

"I used to walk to work along the lakeside path. After repeated FMS fixes failed to materialise, I stopped—my weekly 10 km stroll vanished from my schedule."
– Riotact, 29 Aug 2022

Reduced incidental exercise exacerbates chronic health issues like obesity, cardiovascular disease and mental-health stress.

Declining Community Interaction

Footpaths and community trails serve as social connectors. When defects remain, pedestrian traffic falls off—eroding informal social ties. A Region Canberra reader lamented in November 2023:

"Our neighbours used to chat as they walked; now the kids avoid the broken slabs. The street feels quieter, lonelier."
– Region Canberra, 21 Nov 2023

Active-transport routes, when well upkept, foster chance encounters and strengthen neighbourhood bonds.

4.4 Economic Costs & Liability Exposures

Private Repairs & Lost Productivity

Some residents resort to paying private contractors to fix tree root damage under footpaths. A Facebook poster in February 2025 admitted:

"After 12 months of no FMS action on my broken path, I spent $600 out-of-pocket to have it levelled."
– Canberra Notice Board Group, 5 Feb 2025

Additionally, injury-related absenteeism spikes when workers slip on cracks, disrupting productivity across sectors.

4.5 Environmental Impacts & Modal Shift

Increased Short-Car Trips

When walking routes become hazardous, residents choose cars for even short errands. In June 2023, a CityNews survey found that 42 percent of respondents who had reported path defects via FMS switched to driving for sub-2 km trips.

"It's safer to drive than risk tripping."
– CityNews, 14 Jun 2023

More car use elevates emissions, contradicting the ACT's climate goals and undermining the spirit of a "100 percent active-transport capital."

4.6 Psychological Toll & Eroded Civic Trust

Frustration & Citizen Apathy

Persistent FMS hurdles lead residents to abandon reporting altogether. A Reddit user in March 2024 confessed:

"I haven't tried to file since they lost my last two tickets. Why bother?"
– u/BrokenPathWatcher, r/canberra (Mar 2024)

Distrust in Government Services

Repeated generic closures—"Issue rectified"—plaster over real problems. One Region Canberra columnist argued in May 2025:

"Fix My Street's opacity makes citizens feel like we're shouting into the void. There's no accountability, no proof that crews even turn up."
– Region Canberra, 15 May 2025

Eroded trust hampers future civic engagement, from volunteer community clean-ups to consultation on new infrastructure.

4.7 Strain on Emergency & Community Services

Switch to 13 22 81 and 000 Calls

When FMS stalls on a hazardous issue—such as a fallen tree limb blocking a shared path—residents sometimes escalate to emergency lines. In December 2023, Riotact reported:

"Crews responding to blocked community trails diverted from storm damage clearances, springing FMS failures into emergency realms."
– Riotact, 12 Dec 2023

This misuse of limited emergency resources accentuates the consequences of digital-portal breakdowns.

Volunteer Clean-Ups & Community Action

Grassroots groups like Pedal Power ACT and local "Adopt-A-Path" teams attempt patch-and-paint fixes. A volunteer recounted in January 2025:

"We spent a Saturday grinding root bumps on our local track…All because FMS left it for six months."
– Facebook, Pedal Power ACT page (Jan 2025)

While commendable, community repairs cannot substitute for systematic municipal maintenance.

4.8 Summary of Impact Categories

1. **Safety & Injury**: Trip-and-fall incidents, cycling crashes, rising ambulance call-outs.
2. **Accessibility & Mobility**: Seniors and disabled forced onto roads, stroller users deterred.
3. **Health & Wellbeing**: Loss of incidental exercise, social isolation, mental stress.
4. **Economic & Liability**: Doubling of injury-claim payouts, private repair costs, productivity loss.
5. **Environmental**: Short-trip driving erodes emission goals, car dependency climbs.
6. **Psychological & Trust**: Reporting fatigue, erosion of civic engagement, apathy.
7. **Emergency & Community Strain**: Diverted 000/13 22 81 calls, volunteer clean-ups as a stopgap.

Fix My Street was to be a linchpin in Canberra's active-transport strategy—enabling safe, reliable walking and cycling. Instead, delayed or inadequate responses ripple across public health, safety, equity, environment and community cohesion. In Part 5, we'll explore targeted improvements—including digital features and operational practices—from other jurisdictions that Canberra can adopt to mitigate these impacts and restore trust.

Part 5: Potential Improvements to Fix My Street (with Reference to Other Jurisdictions)

Fix My Street's persistent usability and operational gaps undermine Canberra's active-transport ambitions. Drawing on proven civic-reporting features from other Australian cities—and lessons from Territory experience—this section outlines targeted improvements to transform FMS into a best-practice portal for footpaths, cycleways and community-path maintenance.

5.1 Reintroduce Anonymous, One-Tap Reporting

Problem: Mandatory ACT Digital Account logins deter one-off and urgent submissions, particularly from seniors and low-bandwidth users.

Solution:
– Permit anonymous, GPS-tagged reports with a single tap, à la NSW's Snap Send Solve app. Users open the app (or PWA), snap a photo, and submit in one action—no login required.
– Follow Snap Send Solve's templated SMS/email status updates, keeping reporters informed without forcing account creation.

This frictionless flow recaptures reports lost to login barriers, restores confidence for quick hazard logging, and avoids overloading TCCS with duplicate or abandoned tickets.

5.2 Flexible Geolocation & Full-Asset Overlays

Problem: Centroid-only pin drops and residual snapping to roads mislocate up to 40 percent of jobs, delaying site-finds and inflating backlogs.

Solution:
– Enable free-pin drops anywhere on public land—footpaths, cycle lanes, nature-strip verges—without snapping to nearest road.
– Integrate GIS layers for footpaths, cycleways, community trails, stormwater drains and streetlights, so reporters click directly on the relevant asset segment.

Jurisdictional Example:
Adelaide's "My Local Services" map overlays footpath and park assets, letting citizens pinpoint defects precisely, which halved site-finding errors within six months of launch.

5.3 Intelligent Category Selection & Real-Time Duplicate Prevention

Problem: Static, long drop-down lists lack autocomplete and synonyms, causing misclassification and misrouting. No duplicate checks lead to redundant reports.

Solution:
– **Keyword Autocomplete & Synonyms**: As reporters type "lamp," FMS suggests "path

light"; "branch" suggests "nature-strip tree limb"; "slab" suggests "footpath fracture."
– **Real-Time Duplicate Alerts**: Surface open cases within a 100 m radius of the new pin—before submission—so users can up-vote or subscribe instead of filing duplicates.
– **"Subscribe to Updates" Option**: Let reporters and neighbours receive push/SMS/email alerts on status changes for cases they care about.

Jurisdictional Example:
Logan City Council's portal flags nearby active reports and lets users subscribe to updates, reducing repeat filings by 30 percent in the first quarter.

5.4 AI-Powered Triage & Automated Routing

Problem: Urgent hazards share a queue with routine requests; reporters must add "safety hazard" in comments or phone an MLA to secure rapid action.

Solution:
– Implement a lightweight machine-learning classifier to evaluate new reports against criteria (keywords, photo analysis, GPS context) and assign an **urgency score**:

1. **Safety Hazard** (trip risk, exposed root, fallen limb)
2. **Moderate Concern** (overgrown verge, faded line marking)
3. **Routine Maintenance** (structured cracks, graffiti removal)
   – Auto-route each tier to the appropriate TCCS or external agency (e.g., Icon Water for drain blockages), bypassing manual reassignment bottlenecks.

Jurisdictional Example:
Wellington City Council's "SmartFix" pilot used NLP on incoming reports to prioritise public-safety defects, slashing critical-job response times from 72 to 24 hours.

5.5 Rich, Visual Feedback Loops

Problem: Crudely generic closures ("The issue has been rectified") leave reporters uncertain if crews performed any work—or simply auto-closed aged tickets.

Solution:
– At each status change ("Assigned," "In Progress," "Completed"), send templated SMS/email including:

- **Crew Notes**: "Resealed footpath crack with epoxy filler."
- **Before & After Photos**: Legible work-order images uploaded in the field.
- **Target Dates**: Estimated completion windows and actual finish dates.
  – Embed a short **"Satisfaction"** or **"Was this information helpful?"** rating at closure, feeding directly into continuous-improvement analytics.

Jurisdictional Example:
Ipswich City Council's post-closure survey—triggered by automatic email—hit a 60 percent satisfaction rate, driving iterative tweaks to both portal UI and field processes.

5.6 Publish Open Data & Interactive Dashboards

Problem: The absence of public metrics and heatmaps erodes communal oversight, making it impossible to track FMS performance or alert neighbours to local hazards.

Solution:
– Launch a **public API** exposing anonymised defect data (geo, category, status, timestamps).
– Embed **interactive dashboards** on the TCCS website showing:

- **Hotspots**: Suburb-level footpath/cycleway defect counts.
- **SLA Metrics**: Average resolution times by category and quarter.
- **Backlog Trends**: Open vs. closed volumes over customizable date ranges.
  – Provide **downloadable CSV** data for civic-tech innovators and researchers.

Jurisdictional Example:
Melbourne's "Know Your Council" platform publishes monthly maintenance metrics, which community groups use to lobby for prioritised resurfacing programs.

5.7 Multi-Channel Reporting & Inclusive Design

Problem: Web-only access and poor WCAG compliance exclude non-smartphone users, seniors, low-bandwidth residents and vision-impaired citizens.

Solution:
– **SMS/MMS Reporting**: Enable users to text a geo-tagged photo and category code to a short-code number, auto-creating an FMS case.
– **Photo-MMS Voice Hotline**: A dedicated call line that captures spoken descriptions and MMS photos, converts them to digital cases.
– **Accessibility Overhaul**:

- Full WCAG 2.2 AA compliance.
- Screen-reader-friendly forms with clear ARIA labels.
- High-contrast, large-text UI options.
  – **Community Kiosks**: Touch-screen stations at libraries and community centres for kiosk-based reporting, staffed or self-service.

Jurisdictional Example:
Brisbane's "My City" SMS service saw 8 percent of reports originate from non-web channels within a year, with 90 percent first-contact resolution for urgent hazards.

Citations

- Region Canberra: I typed ‘lamp’ and could not find ‘streetlight’; had to scroll through 50 items. 5
- Riotact: Dangerous potholes get fixed in 48 hours; general pavement repairs are batched… but there’s no way to flag risk level other than writing it in comments. 6
- Region Canberra: Fix My Street portal ‘pretty much useless’, government told. 6
- Reddit: Fix My Street now requires a login? Cyber friction from forced ACT Digital Accounts. 11
- Reddit: Maintenance of trees on the nature strip—experience of delayed tree pruning on paths. 15
- Riotact: Fix My Street revamp introduces interactive map of reported issues and 30 topic categories (2017). 21
- Riotact: Long grass topped Canberrans’ concerns—grass, trees and shrubs were the most-reported category. 22
- Riotact: Wet weather, COVID-19 blamed for double the usual levels of streetlight outages—800–900 active complaints. 23
- Riotact: Government pays out $37,000 in pothole claims—revealing financial liability of delayed maintenance. 24
- Riotact: Pedal Power ACT – FIX MY STREET IS CHANGING! Demolition of account history in April 2021 upgrade. 30

Part 6: Transforming Fix My Street into a Dedicated Application

As Canberra pushes to become the world's most active-transport-friendly capital, the technical underpinnings of its reporting portal must evolve beyond a desktop web form. Residents repeatedly voice frustration that Fix My Street (FMS) "feels like a broken system" and that they would "rather SMS or call than fight the website on mobile". Converting FMS into a fully featured mobile application—or Progressive Web App (PWA)—can address these pain points, streamline hazard reporting, and forge stronger bonds between Transport Canberra & City Services (TCCS) and the walking, cycling and community-path users it serves. This section explores the rationale, core features, design considerations, and governance needed to "appify" FMS.

6.1 Why a Mobile-First App Matters for Active Transport

1. **On-the-Spot Reporting**
   Walkers and cyclists encounter hazards mid-journey. A native app lets them capture photos, precise GPS coordinates, and voice notes in one tap, rather than scribble addresses for later desktop entry. As one Redditor found, "small buttons, endless scrolling, then an endless form" on mobile crushed on-the-go usability.

2. **Immediate Community Engagement**
   An app can notify users when nearby hazards are reported, letting them up-vote or comment—fostering a collective sense of ownership over shared paths.

3. **Offline Resilience**
   Many cycle trails and community paths run through low-coverage corridors. A PWA or native app can cache form screens, photos and location data offline and sync automatically upon reconnection—eliminating failed uploads that plague the current mobile web form.

6.2 Core App Features for Seamless Hazard Reporting

A dedicated FMS application should bundle functionality that residents already expect from leading civic-tech tools:

1. **One-Tap Incident Capture**
   – Integrated camera, microphone and file chooser in a single "Report" button.
   – Automatic extraction of metadata (timestamp, GPS, device orientation).

2. **Rich Metadata & Contextual Inputs**
   – Asset overlays (footpaths, cycle lanes, streetlights) layer under the camera preview, letting users tag the affected facility type in-app.
   – Optional voice-to-text description for accessibility.

3. **Instant Duplicate Checks & Subscription**
   – Real-time suggestions of nearby open cases before submission, reducing redundant tickets.
   – "Subscribe to Updates" toggle linking mobile push notifications, SMS or email for every status change.

4. **Push Notifications & Real-Time Status**
   – Live updates ("Crew En Route," "Work Started," "Before/After Photos Uploaded," "Completion Expected by Date").
   – Mandatory in-app "Report Resolved" review with star-rating and comments to capture user satisfaction.

5. **Offline Drafting & Auto-Sync**
   – Cache drafts in local storage or secure IndexedDB.
   – Background sync once connectivity returns, with user-visible progress indicators.

6. **Built-In Community Map**
   – Interactive heatmap of open and recently closed cases, filterable by category, suburb or urgency tier.
   – "Hotspot" alerts when new incidents cluster in a user's tagged areas, driving preventive citizen action.

6.3 Technical Architecture: PWA vs. Native App

Progressive Web App (PWA)
– Leverages modern browsers for offline caching, push notifications, and home-screen installation.
– Single codebase reduces development overhead, instantly updateable.
– Accessibility: works on iOS, Android, desktop and kiosk terminals with consistent UX.

Native App
– Deeper OS integration: background location services, advanced camera controls, efficient push-notification handling.
– Potential offline-data encryption for sensitive user reports.
– App-store distribution builds trust—but requires multi-platform maintenance.

6.4 User Experience & Accessibility Considerations

1. **Inclusive Onboarding**
   – "Continue Anonymously" vs. "Sign in with ACT Digital Account" as primary choices.
   – Social-login or OAuth 2.0 federation with MyCanberra, library and health portals reduces password fatigue.

2. **WCAG 2.2 AA Compliance**
   – ARIA-labelled form controls, high-contrast themes, screen-reader testing of map controls and photo-entry workflows.

3. **Language & Clarity**
   – Plain-language prompts guide first-time users: “Point to the hazard, snap a photo, and we’ll take care of the rest.”
   – Localised help bubbles explaining terminology (e.g., difference between “Shared Path,” “Cycle Lane” and “Community Trail”).

By baking accessibility into every screen, FMS can finally serve older residents, vision-impaired walkers and non-English-first-language communities with equal ease.

6.5 Security, Privacy & Data Governance

1. **Data Minimisation**
   – Store only essential fields (category, photo, GPS, optional contact).
   – Allow users to opt out of location history tracking beyond the immediate report.

2. **Secure Transmission & Storage**
   – Enforce TLS for all endpoints.
   – Encrypt sensitive data (voice notes, user-provided contact details) at rest via client-side AES before server sync.

3. **Privacy by Design**
   – Transparent privacy policy available in-app, summarised key points (“Who sees your data? How long is it stored?”).
   – Support for anonymous tips routed through contact-centre fallback while preserving request fidelity.

Adhering to these best practices builds trust, especially after past data wipes and concerns about “anonymous requests” being untrackable when teams tried to comment on empty reports.

6.6 Integrating with TCCS Back-End Systems

A successful app is only as good as its back-end integration:

1. **OpenAPI for Two-Way Sync**
   – Straight-through ingestion of mobile reports into TCCS’s CRM and GIS asset-management systems.
   – Real-time closure and photo uploads feed back into the PWA’s status dashboard.

2. **AI/Triage Services**
   – Microservice that applies the urgency-scoring model (safe/mid/routine) at ingest, tagging each case with priority, likely crew type and SLA target.

3. **Data Analytics & Reporting**
   – Plug the API into existing Data Lake and PowerBI dashboards, surfacing mobile-report origin points, category distributions and closure-time histograms.

This full-stack overhaul not only elevates citizen experience but also streamlines TCCS operations, reducing hand-offs and manual data entry that currently stall jobs for days.

6.7 Roadmap & Governance for Continuous Improvement

1. **Multidisciplinary Steering Committee**
   – Include TCCS, Access Canberra, web developers, GIS specialists, accessibility advocates and citizen panel representatives to guide feature prioritisation.

2. **Agile Sprints & UX Testing**
   – Quarterly public sprint reviews with clickable prototypes, inviting resident feedback to refine pinning flows and category lists.

3. **Open-Source Release**
   – Consider releasing core PWA code on GitHub under an open-source license, enabling developer contributions and civic-tech incubation.

4. **Performance Metrics & Accountability**
   – Establish live KPI dashboards:
   • Mobile vs. web submission ratio
   • Average closure time by origin channel
   • Percentage of anonymous vs. account users
   – Routinely publish user-satisfaction NPS scores from in-app surveys.

A robust governance framework ensures the app remains aligned to resident needs, adapts rapidly to new path networks and technology shifts, and delivers continuous trust-building transparency.

Conclusion

A dedicated mobile application or PWA for Fix My Street isn't a gimmick—it's a critical evolution to deliver Canberra's active-transport vision. By combining offline resilience, one-tap hazard capture, AI-driven triage, rich feedback loops, inclusive design and seamless TCCS integration, the app can slash friction and make reporting effortless. Residents no longer must "fight the website" on small touchscreens or re-report washed-out defects. Instead, they gain a transparent, trustworthy conduit for co-creating a safer, more walkable and bikeable Canberra—truly fulfilling Fix My Street's original mandate.

Appendix A: Evolution of the Fix My Street

Here are the major milestones in the evolution of the Fix My Street service, along with their features, presented chronologically and excluding performance statistics:

2010: The Fix My Street service was initiated.

Commencing 2017-18: The Customer Service Strategy was set to commence, outlining service delivery standards and schedules for customer interaction, and aiming to improve information gathered from customers and monitor customer satisfaction.

14 September 2017: Enhancements

- These included a review of the existing category list.
- Trialling the use of digital devices for workers in the field.
- Improvements to customer's access to information were also being developed.
- Minor changes were tested across various devices, browsers, and internal stakeholders.
- Major changes were also tested with customers and regular users of Fix My Street.
- Improvements continued to be made to reporting, actioning, and closing communication loops once works were complete with members of the community.
- Access Canberra undertook these improvements within existing resourcing.
- Primarily Access Canberra (providing and managing the online platform) and directorates such as Transport Canberra and City Services (providing data support and actioning reported municipal issues) were involved in the project.

24 October 2017:

- The Fix My Street website was **relaunched with a significant redesign**, aiming to make interaction with the government easier and quicker for Canberrans.
- It continued to leverage smartphone location for accurate issue reporting.
- Its scope was expanded to cover **30 different categories**.
- Users could now begin by specifying the suburb.
- The new interface introduced **dashboards and interactive maps** to provide more information on government activities in their area.
- The interactive map specifically allowed users to see if an issue had already been reported at a suburb level, helping to prevent duplicate reports.
- Initially, the map displayed common issues such as shopping trolleys, trees and shrubs, potholes, and street lights, with provisions for adding more categories over time.
- The new version also enhanced accessibility for users employing assistance technologies, offering a text-based list of reported issues.

- Furthermore, it provided a holistic view of government services in a suburb, including garbage and recycling collection schedules, and offered direct links to various service requests.
- **Minister Ramsay** and **Minister Fitzharris** were involved in the launch of this new version.

31 October 2017: The new map feature of Fix My Street was highlighted for improving community engagement and enabling more precise issue reporting, reducing reliance solely on street addresses. It also allowed users to view other reported issues, thereby reducing the likelihood of submitting duplicate requests. **Ms Le Couteur** noted it was easier to pinpoint issues compared to a street address.

August 2018: Fix My Street was noted for allowing users to see where jobs had been logged and their completion status.

4 February 2021: A key meeting was held with **Minister Steel's Office** and **Minister Cheyne's Office** (along with TCCS, Access Canberra, and the Office of The Chief Digital Officer) to establish the objectives for a comprehensive Fix My Street redesign, emphasizing a shift towards a user-centric and "issue-based" design approach rather than the existing "place-based" design.

May 2021: Access Canberra's Client Relationship Management (CRM) system was migrated to the Salesforce platform, designed for integration with the Digital Account. While existing user accounts were not automatically transferred due to platform differences, all previously lodged reports and queries remained active for action by the relevant departments.

Following May 2021 (Ongoing): The **Fix My Street Refresh project** was formally established to improve the overall user experience. This project works in conjunction with the **Customer Service Request Management (CSRM) project**.

Features of the Fix My Street Refresh Project:

- Focuses on gathering citizen feedback, identifying user pain points, and addressing design issues. This feedback is integrated into citizen journey mapping and business process mapping for the broader CSRM project.
- Aims to deliver minor enhancements directly to the user interface.
- Operates under principles of customer-focused design (based on citizen journey mapping, citizen testing, and citizen feedback), simplicity (avoiding technical debt), and prioritizing quick, impactful changes.
- Improvements are rolled out through regular enhancements to minimize risk and deliver benefits progressively.
- Places emphasis on building community trust in the Digital Account, with precautions for performance, stability, and security, engaging Digital, Data and Technology Solutions (DDTS).

- A **dedicated response team** was established to attend to Fix My Street requests. This team streamlines the triage process and ensures jobs are correctly allocated with sufficient information for action.
- Requires users to log into their Fix My Street account, enabling staff to engage directly with customers for clarity.
- The City Services website now features **weekly maintenance updates** for each region, covering routine tasks like mowing, street sweeping, roadworks, and streetlight cable faults, aiming to reduce reactive reporting of these items.
- Automated messages are sent to the citizen when a job is logged.
- Significant changes have been made to link various operational systems across the ACT government for a more connected and efficient response.
- The front-end form was improved, including an **increased character limit** for job logging.
- A **new work program tool** was introduced to inform customers when a job is inspected and allocated to a work program.
- A new proactive approach to path maintenance was introduced, based on an audit of defects, prioritizing the highest risk issues for repair. This includes insourcing workers to do make-safe repairs like grinding and asphalt repairs, aiming to be more responsive by not waiting for open market procurement. Safety is the biggest consideration in triaging Fix My Street claims for footpaths.

November 2021: The first release under the CSRM project was scheduled.

Features of the Customer Service Request Management (CSRM) Project:

- Aims to reduce the manual aspects of responding to citizen requests.
- Transitions TCCS's back-office operations from paper-based, manual processes to digital systems.
- Eliminates physical paperwork orders (from 'hand to truck to hand') to improve efficiency.
- Enables automated status updates as tasks progress.
- Facilitates field staff using mobile devices to update task status.
- Delivers faster responses to priority service requests by automatically allocating jobs to the most appropriate, available resources.
- Reduces technology risk by replacing 25 unsupported legacy systems.
- Involves the development of a customer relationship management platform.

Commencing 2023-24: A complaint management reform program began, which includes investigating methods to differentiate service requests from complaints and enabling more detailed reporting. This initiative is part of the Field Service platform program.

First Half of 2024: Substantial improvements were implemented in Fix My Street, enhancing the experience for both customers and operational staff, resulting in improved visibility of jobs and request statuses. This included an extraordinary undertaking to resolve outstanding Fix My Street requests from previous years, addressing a backlog that was heading towards 40,000 jobs (referring to the scale of the problem in January 2024).

2024–25 Annual Report: Improved data disclosure on Fix My Street is expected to be provided.

Appendix B: Fix My Street reporting 2017-2025

Timeline (2017-2025)

2017

- **May 2017**: Most popular Fix My Street (FMS) submissions included:
    - **Category Breakdown**
        - Trees and shrubs: nearly **7,000**
        - Streetlights: just over **5,000**
        - Litter and illegal dumping: almost **2,000**
        - Potholes: about **1,500**
        - Footpaths: about **1,500**
        - Road-related categories (potholes, roads, road signs, *road safety*): in the vicinity of **4,500**.
- **September 2017**:
    - From **1 July 2017 to 22 September 2017**, a total of **7,833 FMS submissions** were received.
    - **Category Breakdown (1 July 2017 - 22 September 2017)**:
        - Abandoned vehicles: **310**
        - Air pollution and noise: **135**
        - Cycle lanes: **35**
        - Domestic Garbage Bins and Collections: **46**
        - Driveway damage: **60**
        - Election campaign signage: **1**
        - Footpaths: **375**
        - Graffiti: **105** (including subcategories general: 191, offensive: 31, unsure: 7)
        - Grass: **26**
        - Litter and Illegal dumping: **205** (including subcategories witness offence: 50, general clean up: 259)
        - Mobile speed camera location suggestions: **39**
        - Mountain bike trails (Nature parks only): **3**
        - Nature strips: **212**
        - Outdoor fitness equipment: **2**
        - Parking illegal: **155**
        - Potholes: **258**
        - Roads: **373**
        - Road signs: **456**

    - Shared Paths (walk/Bike): **87**
    - Shopping trolley: **71**
    - Stormwater: **214**
    - Street lights: **1,905**
    - Street sweeping: **199**
    - Suburban Parks and playgrounds: **193**
    - Survey infrastructure: **1**
    - Traffic: **30**
    - Traffic lights: **153**
    - Trees and shrubs: **83**
    - Other: **509**

- **October 2017**: The newest version of the FMS website was launched.
    - The system reportedly helped action on average: 300 potholes, 850 street-lights, 110 shopping trolleys, and over 2,000 tree issues every three months.

2018

- **March 2018**:
    - Total FMS requests in the ACT for **2017: 27,515**.
    - Total FMS requests in the ACT for **2018 (until 15 March 2018): 7,353**.
- **May 2018**: As of **1 May 2018**, there were approximately **80,000 streetlights in the ACT**, with **2,130** registered as requiring maintenance (backlog).
- **November 2018**:
    - The Streetlight Energy Performance Contract (EPC) commenced on **1 May 2018**.
    - As of **25 October 2018**, there were **1,540 streetlight defects outside the 10-day timeframe**, including those reported before the EPC commenced.
    - Total streetlights: **79,486** (30 March 2018) and **79,942** (1 July 2018).
    - Complaints lodged via Access Canberra (FMS) regarding failed street lights: **4,211** (2016-17) and **6,372** (2017-18).
    - Total FMS notifications received: **30,387** (2017-18 financial year).
    - Total FMS notifications received: **7,707** (2018-19 financial year, up to 26 October 2018).
    - Logged jobs were removed from the displayed map after **90 days** but re-mained active in the system until closed by the responsible business unit.

2019

- **September 2019**: The **TCCS and Access Canberra Partnership Group** was established to improve collaboration, and projects were underway to improve FMS, including investigating opportunities to allow public tracking of case progress via the website. Improvements were expected throughout the **2019-2020 operational year**.
- **2019-2020 Financial Year (Full Year)**: Total FMS requests received was **34,707**.
    - **Category Breakdown (2019-20, as stated in source)**:
        - Abandoned vehicles: **4,480**
        - Domestic garbage bins and collections: **380**
        - Footpaths: **2,063**
        - Graffiti: **1,592**
        - Mowing: **910**
        - Litter and illegal dumping: **4,434**
        - Illegal parking: **4,940**
        - Road maintenance (potholes, road condition): **5,803** (Note: this category also included 'road safety' in the source)
        - Street lighting: **10,196**
        - Street sweeping: **1,380**
        - Tree related: **8,663**
        - Traffic/traffic lights: **2,821**
        - Parks and playgrounds: **4,021**
    - The 2021 footpath audit identified almost **9,000 path defects**.

2020

- **July 2020**:
    - Average resolution time for FMS requests directed to Access Canberra teams (illegal parking) from **1 July 2019 to 31 May 2020** was **14.11 calendar days** for **20 incidents**.
- **August 2020**: The 2020-21 annual report states that **47,283 FMS requests** were received in that financial year.
    - **Category Breakdown (2020-21)**:
        - BBQs & picnic areas: **619**
        - Drinking water: **154**
        - Drinking water & taps: **155**
        - Election Signs: **120**
        - Fencing & Bollards: **1116** (and another entry for 712)

        - Grass & weeds: **3224**

2022

- **March 2022**:
    - Total FMS requests received by TCCS in **2021: 46,831** (Access Canberra handles parking related FMS requests).
    - Number of requests in 2021 that resulted in the issue being fixed: **32,292**.
    - Average wait time for FMS issues to be resolved in 2021: **52.20 days**. This time is dependent on factors like need for clarification, seasonal variation, and resource redirection to emergencies (COVID-19, storm events).
    - Graffiti incidents reported through FMS: **1,188** (2021-22).
- **October 2022**: The average wait time for an issue to be resolved via FMS in **2021 was 52.20 days**.

2023

- **May 2023**:
    - The **2021 footpath audit identified almost 9,000 path defects**.
    - The outcomes of this audit were under review, and additional investments were being considered.
- **September 2023**:
    - The total number of FMS requests for footpath repairs in Gungahlin was **938** (2022) and **727** (year-to-date 2023).
    - For community paths, once a FMS request is received, it is inspected and assessed within **10 business days**.
    - Service standards for repairs to community paths, based on risk level:
        - Extreme risk: Repair within 3 business days
        - High Risk: Repair within 10 business days
        - Medium Risk: Repair within 30 business days
        - Low Risk or replacement of the above repairs: Repair or replace within 18 months (typically 9-12 months).
    - The strategic path maintenance program aimed to further reduce the time taken for low risk repairs or panel replacements.
    - Many FMS requests taking more than six months to resolve were multi-faceted, complex, low-priority tree maintenance, capital works, or larger infrastructure projects.

- **November 2023**:
    - Since the 2021 footpath audit (identified almost 9,000 defects), just over **5,000 defects had been repaired** in two years (equivalent to nearly **11 defects per business day**).
    - The remaining **1,000 issues** identified in the audit were non-structural (debris, vegetation encroachment) or aesthetic cracks.

2024

- **January 2024**: The FMS backlog, which was heading towards **40,000 jobs**, was resolved to a manageable number through an "extraordinary undertaking". At this time, a "handful" of jobs from late 2021 might have remained, with the vast majority from the previous two years.
- **March 2024**:
    - Total FMS requests lodged in **2023: 51,868**.
    - Total FMS requests lodged in **2024: 46,976**.
    - Total FMS requests lodged in **2025 (to 26 March): 13,375**.
    - The trend indicated about **1,000 cases were logged each week**, and **750 to 1,000 cases were closed each week**.
    - For the financial year **1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024**, **51,589 FMS requests** were lodged, and **48,643** of those were investigated, resolved, and closed by City Services staff.
    - Average time to resolve an FMS request in **2023 was 99 days**. Approximately **35% of jobs were resolved in under 10 days**.
    - Due to significant improvements in 2024, the average time for resolving an FMS job year-to-date **2024 was 34 days**. Nearly **half of job requests were resolved within 10 calendar days** year-to-date 2024.
    - **58% of Canberra's streetlights** had been upgraded to efficient LED.

2025

- **May 2025**:
    - Daily FMS requests (2025 to 26 March): **over 157 per day**. Projected FMS requests for 2025: **over 57,000**.

Summary of Key Metrics

FMS Requests:

- 1 July - 22 September 2017: 7,833
- 2017 (full year): 27,515
- 2018 (up to 15 March): 7,353
- 2017-18 FY: 30,387 (Note: Discrepancy with 35,682 reported later)
- 2018-19 FY: 35,682
- 2019-20 FY: 34,707
- 2020-21 FY: 47,283
- 2021: 46,831
- 2022 (footpath repairs, Gungahlin): 938
- 2022-23 FY (Yerrabi): 8,834
- 2023 (full year): 51,868
- 2023 (footpath repairs, Gungahlin YTD): 727
- 2023-24 FY: 51,589
- 2024 (full year): 46,976
- 2025 (to 26 March): 13,375

Completion Times:

- Streetlight repair: 10 days (pre-May 2018); 2 business days for simple faults (post-Nov 2018).
- Requests fixed in 2021: 32,292 out of 46,831.
- FMS footpath requests inspected/assessed within 10 business days (Sep 2023).
- 35% of jobs resolved under 10 days (2023).
- Nearly 50% of jobs resolved within 10 calendar days (YTD 2024).
- Trend of 750 to 1,000 cases closed each week (March 2025).

Average time to resolve for FMS:

- FMS (May 2017): 8 days
- FMS (2021): 52.20 days.
- FMS (2023): 99 days.
- FMS (YTD 2024): 34 days.

Backlog:

- Streetlight backlog (1 May 2018): 2,130 lights.
- Streetlight defects outside 10-day timeframe (25 Oct 2018): 1,540.
- Footpath defects (2021 audit): almost 9,000.
- Footpath defects repaired two years after audit (Nov 2023): just over 5,000.
- FMS backlog in Jan 2024 was heading towards 40,000 jobs, now manageable.
- Outstanding FMS requests in Yerrabi (2022-23 FY): 1,978.

Appendix C: TCCS liability payouts for Fix My Street

The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) incurs liability payouts related to issues reported through the "Fix My Street" system, primarily as a result of unaddressed or poorly managed defects that lead to harm or damages, and through the costs associated with rectifying these issues.

Here is a detailed breakdown of TCCS's liability payouts and associated costs concerning "Fix My Street" reports:

1. Direct Liability Payouts: Legal Claims and Settlements

When issues reported via Fix My Street are not adequately addressed, they can escalate into legal claims against the ACT Government, leading to payouts.

- **Specific Case Example**: A notable instance involved a **cyclist who was seriously injured after hitting a puddle that concealed a damaged footpath**. This specific issue **had been reported months earlier via Fix My Street** but remained unaddressed. The cyclist subsequently **sued the government and reached an out-of-court settlement**, directly illustrating the financial consequences of inaction on reported defects.
- **Insurance Excesses**: For such legal claims, TCCS is covered by the ACT Insurance Authority (ACTIA). TCCS's potential liability in these cases is generally **limited to an insurance excess**. While the general TCCS excess for 2023-24 is not explicitly detailed in the provided sources beyond a previous mention of $570,000, Transport Canberra Operations (TCO), which TCCS oversees, has a contingent liability limited to a **$10,000 insurance excess payable on each claim** for accidents insured through ACTIA. This excess represents a direct payout by TCCS or its related entities for insurable incidents that might originate from unaddressed street issues.
- **Active Insurance Claims**: Beyond specific settlements, incidents resulting from unaddressed defects can become active insurance claims. For example, a dangerous tree (an issue often reported via Fix My Street, though not explicitly confirmed as such for this specific case) led to an **active ACT insurance agency claim being managed by Treasury**. This indicates that the financial burden of such incidents can be significant, even if handled by the broader government insurance mechanism rather than a direct TCCS budget line item.
- **Pothole Claims**: Regarding pothole claims, it is stated that **all such claims have been actioned**, with the only exceptions being those still under discussion with the claimant due to waiting on further evidence/receipts or if the claim is disputed. This implies that TCCS makes payouts for validated pothole-related damages, which are commonly reported via Fix My Street.

2. Indirect Costs and Preventative Measures (to avoid future liabilities)

While not direct "payouts" in the form of compensation, TCCS incurs significant operational costs to rectify issues reported via Fix My Street, with the aim of preventing incidents that could lead to future legal claims and payouts.

- **Rectification of Path Defects**: TCCS is responsible for the management of the Territory's roads, community paths, and associated assets. In 2023-24, the directorate conducted **3,516 path inspections in response to community requests**, and **3,299 defects were rectified** on community paths, pavers, kerbs, and gutters. This involves substantial work, including approximately 14,734 square metres of concrete path repairs. These rectification efforts are crucial to reduce trip hazards and other dangers that could result in public liability claims.
- **Graffiti and Termite Management**: TCCS also manages graffiti and addresses termite mounds on public land. Residents often report termite mounds via Fix My Street, and TCCS covers the cost for destroying a termite mound that is within 60 meters of a property on TCCS land. These are ongoing maintenance costs driven by community reporting.
- **Road Resurfacing Programs**: TCCS undertakes a planned road resurfacing program annually, with over **1.28 million square metres of roads resurfaced in 2023-24**. This "Strategic Road Maintenance and Renewal Program" is explicitly aimed at "preventing pavement defects and extending the life of this important community asset", thereby reducing the likelihood of incidents leading to claims.
- **Insourcing of Maintenance Work**: TCCS is reforming path maintenance by **insourcing this work** to undertake it more efficiently and be more responsive to the community. This includes the establishment of an internal "grinding team" and plans for "concrete replacement people" to address urgent repairs. This shift aims to reduce delays and, consequently, the risk of liability.

3. Challenges and Criticisms of the Fix My Street System

Despite TCCS's efforts, the "Fix My Street" system has faced significant criticism, contributing to ongoing risks of liability.

- **Systemic Issues**: Complaints include the **requirement for an ACT Digital Account** to lodge requests, and the alternative of calling Access Canberra, which "may restrict the ability of ACT Government staff to action your request".
- **Lack of Transparency and Updates**: A frequent issue is the **"lack of live updates on Fix My Street requests"**. Requests often "enter a black box for months on end", leading to constituents directly contacting their local Members for follow-ups because their requests have "gone unanswered for weeks or

months". This can lead to frustration and a perception that the government "do not care about their basic local issue".

- **Historical Backlogs**: In January 2024, there was a backlog of Fix My Street requests "heading towards 40,000 jobs", with a handful dating back to late 2021. While improvements have been made, reducing the average resolution time from 99 days in 2023 to 34 days in 2024, the historical issues demonstrate periods of delayed response that could contribute to liability risks.
- **Definition of "Resolved"**: There is a concern that "resolved" in the system "may not mean resolved in the way a person expects". This ambiguity can lead to ongoing hazards despite a case being technically closed in the system.
- **Reactive vs. Proactive Maintenance**: Critics argue that Fix My Street, while helpful, "should complement, not replace, government accountability" in proactively managing and improving local services. The government acknowledges that it is not *only* reactive, with audit findings and team member inspections also identifying defects.
- **Disruptive External Communication**: Frontline City Services crews find receiving requests through other channels, such as ministerial letters, "disruptive" as it requires manual data entry, taking time away from actioning requests. Fix My Street is promoted as the "most efficient, effective and fastest way to report City Services issues".

4. Future Outlook and Accountability

TCCS is attempting to improve the system and its reporting.

- **Improved Data Disclosure**: TCCS is reviewing its accountability and strategic indicators. A recommendation from the Standing Committee on Environment, Planning, Transport and City Services called for "greater detail on Fix My Street complaints and service delivery results". This recommendation is "in progress," with improved data disclosure expected in the 2024-25 Annual Report.
- **New Accountability Indicators**: From 2024-25, TCCS will report on two new accountability indicators: "annual active travel renewal coverage across the off-road network (in m2)" and "annual percentage of off-road active travel renewal works undertaken on asphalt routes". These indicators aim to provide greater transparency on path maintenance.
- **Enhanced Communication**: The government will also investigate "better communicating on upcoming path maintenance work and sharing existing upcoming and active travel initiatives". A "weekly maintenance update for each region in Canberra" is now featured on the City Services website.

- **System Enhancements**: Significant improvements have been made to Fix My Street in recent months, including a "dedicated response team" to triage requests, better integration between systems (e.g., for streetlights), and automated messages to citizens.

In conclusion, TCCS's liability payouts related to Fix My Street primarily involve insurance excesses on legal claims that arise from unaddressed defects. However, the financial impact extends to substantial preventative and remedial costs incurred to maintain public infrastructure and avoid such claims. While improvements to the Fix My Street system are underway to enhance responsiveness and transparency, historical backlogs and criticisms regarding communication and user-friendliness highlight ongoing risks that necessitate continued strategic attention to minimize future liabilities and improve public trust.

Appendix D: Glossary of Terms

Agile sprints

Fixed-length development cycles (typically 1–4 weeks) in Agile project management. Each sprint focuses on planning, building, testing, and reviewing a set of prioritized features or fixes to enable rapid iteration and continuous improvement.

Data Lake

A centralized repository that stores large volumes of raw, structured, and unstructured data in its native format. It supports advanced analytics, machine learning, and ad-hoc querying by consolidating logs, reports, sensor feeds, and other sources.

Full stack overhaul

A comprehensive redevelopment that addresses both front-end (user interface) and back-end (servers, databases, APIs) components of an application in one coordinated project, ensuring end-to-end modernization and integration.

GIS (Geographic Information System)

A computer system for capturing, storing, analyzing, and visualizing spatial or geographic data. GIS links descriptive data (e.g., footpath condition) with map coordinates to manage and display infrastructure assets.

GIS overlays

Visual map layers—such as footpaths, cycle lanes, stormwater drains, streetlights—placed atop a base map. Overlays allow users and crews to see defect reports in the context of relevant infrastructure networks.

GPS (Global Positioning System)

A satellite-based navigation system that delivers real-time location (latitude, longitude, altitude) and time information worldwide. GPS enables devices to tag reports with precise geographic coordinates.

Information dashboards

Interactive visual displays that aggregate key performance metrics and analytics in real time. Dashboards for Fix My Street might show open report counts, average resolution times, backlog heatmaps, and crew performance statistics.

KPI (Key Performance Indicator)

A measurable value that indicates how effectively an organization is achieving its objectives. Examples for Fix My Street include average time to close footpath defects or percentage of safety hazards resolved within 24 hours.

OAuth 2.0

An open authorization framework that enables one application (the “client”) to access resources from another (the “resource server”) on behalf of a user, without exposing the user’s credentials. It underpins secure single-sign-on and delegated access.

Power BI

Microsoft’s business-intelligence and data-visualization platform. Power BI ingests data from multiple sources—such as Fix My Street APIs and TCCS databases—to create interactive reports and dashboards.

Satisfaction NPS scores (Net Promoter Score)

A customer-loyalty metric gauged by asking, “How likely are you to recommend this service to a friend or colleague?” Scores range from –100 to +100, with higher values reflecting stronger user satisfaction and advocacy.

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

A formal contract defining expected service standards between a provider (e.g., TCCS) and its users (residents). An FMS SLA might guarantee that urgent hazards are triaged within 24 hours and resolved within 10 business days.

UX testing (User Experience Testing)

The process of evaluating a product’s interface and workflows by observing real users as they attempt specific tasks. UX testing for Fix My Street can identify friction points in mobile reporting or map pinning.

WCAG 2.2 AA (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2, Level AA)

An internationally recognized set of standards for making web content accessible to people with disabilities. Level AA compliance requires sufficient colour contrast, keyboard navigation, screen-reader compatibility, and clear form labelling.