



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: 052

Submitter: Matt Watts

Date authorised for publication: 28 August 2025

MATT WATTS



22 August 2025

To: *Standing Committee on Transport and City Services*
(LACommitteeTransport@parliament.act.gov.au)

Cc: *Leanne Castley MLA, Member for Yerrabi* (Castley@parliament.act.gov.au)

Andrew Braddock MLA, Member for Yerrabi (Braddock@parliament.act.gov.au)

Taimus Werner-Gibbings MLA, Member for Brindabella (Taimus.WG@parliament.act.gov.au)

Re: Inquiry into the effectiveness of Fix My Street

Dear Chair,

Fix My Street is a potentially wonderful supplement to the ACT Government's maintenance program. Sadly, the ACT Government has failed to recognise that the community reporting of public infrastructure defects should not replace a maintenance program, specifically the concept of *preventative maintenance*.

As a former facilities manager, I have personally experienced the importance of preventative maintenance in prolonging infrastructure and successfully executing a maintenance budget. In one case, it was a question of whether to progressively take a selection of accommodation offline for routine maintenance or to continue using the entirety of that accommodation block during a period of high demand; our failure to prioritise preventative maintenance ensured that all the accommodation in question came offline within the same week, in an unscheduled manner, because the infrastructure lifespan was reached at the same time. Rather than being in control of the maintenance program, we were left scrambling to bring the accommodation back online in a less cost-effective manner than had we proactively undertaken the work. It was observed that, "a stitch, in time, saves nine," and we did not repeat the error of prioritising short-term interests over the obligation to maintain infrastructure.

For the ACT Government, it should be broadly aware of the expected lifespan of community infrastructure such as lighting, roads, drains, and footpaths, thus it should be able to adopt a planned approach to maintenance and/or replacement. At present, it seems the ACT's public infrastructure is left to fail before there is any action to maintain, repair, or replace it; such an approach means the ACT Government is always playing catch-up, and it is unable to accurately forecast its maintenance budget. ACT residents are left to pay, both in the form of enduring substandard infrastructure and increased rates.

That is to say, I believe Fix My Street should be a tool to assist with unexpected repair or replacement needs *in addition to* a planned maintenance program. Fix My Street should not be a way of kicking the inevitable down the road in a misguided hope that infrastructure would last indefinitely. The developers of Fix My Street deserve better, because it is not their fault that the ACT Government either does not understand or care about community infrastructure.

This submission is supported by the fact there is a backlog of Fix My Street requests, which indicates the lack of a successful maintenance program. Once the Committee realises the importance of a maintenance program, I suggest it undertakes a targeted inquiry into the ACT Government's administration of it (should one in fact exist).

Yours Sincerely,

Matthew Watts JP