



STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES  
Jo Clay MLA (Chair), Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair), Mark Parton MLA

**Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by Nicole Lawder MLA:

Ref: Mowing, Budget Paper H, Page 3

In relation to: Mowing

1. Compared to last year's budget, does the budget contain any additional funding for mowers or mowing equipment?
  - a) Compared to last year's budget, does the budget contain any additional funding for staff to mow?
  - b) It's already been predicted that we're expecting to have a wetter spring and summer than usual this year. What is being done to prepare for this?
  - c) How is mowing scheduled?
  - d) What proportion of mowing conducted in 2020/21 is not in line with the programmed schedule as a result of responding to complaints from the public?
  - e) If they cannot answer – Are you saying scheduled and unscheduled mowing is not tracked?
  - f) How is mowing prioritised?
  - g) Yes or No, is mowing of grasslands near schools prioritised over other types of mowing?
  - h) What height is the grass mown at in suburban areas and alongside roads?
  - i) How are grass clippings collected in parks and grasslands and alongside roads that are mown?
  - j) What height is the grass mown at adjacent to waterways?
  - k) Is there a difference the further from the water it is mown i.e., are there meant to be variable heights mown? Or is it all mown to one height?
  - l) Are grass clippings collected near waterways? How?

Mr Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The budget is consistent with the previous year's base budget.
  - a) The 2020-21 ACT Budget provided funding for Phase 3 of the Fast-track program which included \$2.1 million for additional lawn mowing across Canberra. An additional boost for mowing was therefore already factored into available resourcing.
  - b) Preparations for the season started early – in July 2021. Preparations included completion of training; undertaking a mechanical and safety service on all vehicles; performance testing of supporting equipment; and earlier procurement of contracts to undertake additional mowing on arterial roads.
  - c) Mowing is scheduled on a regular calendar cycle. The mowing program seeks to mow public open spaces every four weeks and arterial roads every five weeks during peak growing periods. Mowing of sportsgrounds is undertaken on a more frequent basis to ensure the playing surface remains safe and fit for purpose. Irrigated parks are mown more frequently than non-irrigated parks. Fire fuel reduction mowing is undertaken as required depending on seasonal conditions, when the grass has reached a suitable level of dryness.
  - d) Mowing performance is monitored only against the servicing program outlined in answer 1(c).
  - e) Unscheduled mowing is not tracked against the scheduled mowing program. Scheduled mowing is tracked with upcoming works presented on the online mowing map on the City Services website.
  - f) The mowing program prioritises:
    - Increasing motorist safety through ensuring line of sight near roadways
    - Reducing the risk to suburbs from bushfire by reducing fire fuel
    - Allowing for public recreation and formal sport through the mowing of ovals
    - Improving public access to, and the use of open spaces
    - Protecting the environment by reducing weed seed, creating habitat for endangered species (e.g. Golden Sun Moth) and promoting growth of native grass species
  - g) Not necessarily. Prioritisation depends on a number of factors as outlined in the answer to 1(f).
  - h) Between 75 and 100mm.
  - i) Grass clippings are not collected in parks, grasslands and along roads. Operators ensure that excess grass in gutters and on footpaths is blown clean after an area is mown.
  - j) Generally, the area directly adjacent to waterways is not mown. Further back from these riparian areas, grass is mown between 75 and 100mm.
  - k) No. Grass in urban open space areas is mown to one height.

- l) No, grass clippings are not collected next to waterways. To limit the contamination to waterways, mowing operators are trained to keep the grass discharge direction facing away from channels when mowing around stormwater drains and culverts. In addition, an unmown buffer zone is maintained between a waterbody and mown areas.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services

Signature:



Date:

4/11/21

By the Minister for Transport and City Services, Mr Chris Steel MLA