



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Transport
and City Services

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the provision of municipal services in Canberra

Submission number: 025

Submitter: Community Sport Alliance ACT

Date authorised for publication: 18 December 2025



**SUBMISSION by The Community Sport Alliance of the ACT
to the Legislative Assembly's Inquiry
into the
provision of municipal services in Canberra.**

Introduction:

We thank the Legislative Assembly and the Committee for providing the opportunity to make a submission to this threshold inquiry into community sport participation.

Providing a submission to this legislature Inquiry does offer a sense of optimism for finding better ways to provide higher quality, and better maintained, amenities for the provision of community sport and its contribution to the way of life and the overall liveability of Canberra.

At the outset, we have some recommendations for the Committee to ponder and hopefully embrace as mechanisms for bringing about change and improvement.

We are realistic about the ACT's current financial and economic standing, which provides a backdrop for the Government to consider how it best interacts with, and more importantly better utilises, the continual contribution that community sport makes towards life in the Nation's Capital.

In this submission, our comments are more of being aspirational for a better future rather than focussing on the minutiae of current day examples.

From our perspective, items a) and b) of the Inquiry's terms of reference, ie:

- a) The maintenance and upkeep of public spaces such as playgrounds, sportsgrounds, local shops, verges and waterways; and
- b) The appropriateness of the geographic spread of active travel infrastructure, parks and playgrounds.

relate to our interest in this Inquiry.

Statement:

For this Inquiry into municipal services we think the core issue is ensuring that the presentation of public sporting assets (through proper maintenance and upkeep) should 'go hand-in-glove' with issues of accessibility, safety, and co-location with other amenities and services.





As the community sport sector is a significant user of public space in Canberra, we have formed the view that it is the provision of municipal services that defines how much a government, and consequently a community, value the open space and the indoor and outdoor community sport facilities that are integrated into the daily life of the city.

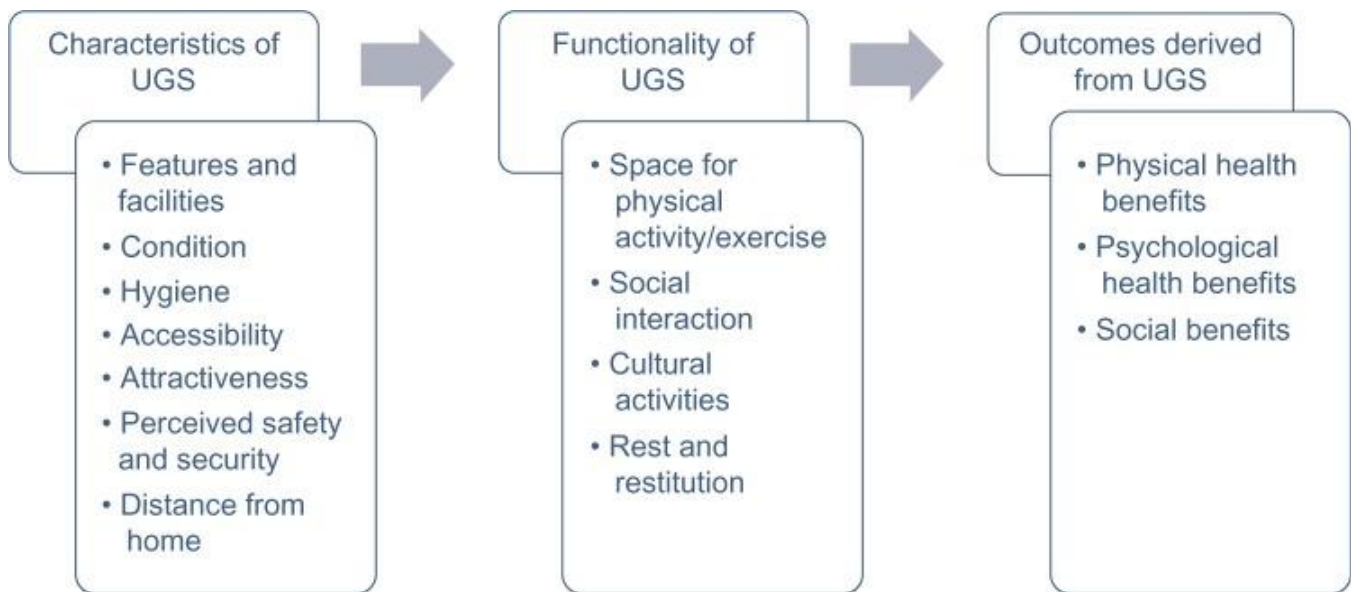
The maintenance and upkeep of public spaces is a matter of leadership and setting standards – we think this is a core government responsibility. If the government is undertaking regular and good quality care of public facilities, it underpins belief in the community that through action the government values how and why the community interacts.

On the flipside, if there is governmental unwillingness (mainly through priority setting and budgetary commitment) to set and maintain the standards in the keeping of public assets as attractive and safe locations, then the use and quality of those public assets can readily diminish.

As a useful touchstone (for understanding the social and health value of using green space in a city - for our group that means organised sporting space) the Committee may appreciate the table below:

This work was undertaken by Lee A, Jordan H, Horsley J. - School of Health and Related Research, University of Sheffield. Value of urban green spaces in promoting healthy living and wellbeing: prospects for planning. *Risk Management and Healthcare Policy*. Dovepress, 2015.

Relationship between urban green space characteristics, functionality, and outcomes.



UGS: urban green space





Other Reference documents:

Following are links to, and short quotes from, some articles that the Committee may find useful. These articles from institutions that have spent resources considering the valuable role that good quality open space for community activity and sport in urban settings can play in supporting and improving social, physical and mental health of citizens and the economic and environmental well-being of communities.

Australian Institute of Health and Well-being – Built Environment and Health

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/built-environment-and-health>

“...areas of public and private land that feature some form of vegetation, such as nature reserves, public parks, residential gardens and outdoor sporting facilities (AIHW 2011). Green space has various positive impacts on physical and mental health.”

Office of the Victorian Government Architect - The case for good design: Urban design

<https://www.ovga.vic.gov.au/case-good-design-urban-design-guide-government>

“Public open spaces, including parks, gardens, waterways, civic squares, streets and laneways, support health and wellbeing by providing places for social interaction, recreation and the ability to connect with nature.”

United Nations - Healthier cities and communities through public spaces

https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2025/01/final_public_space_and_urban_health.pdf

“Green and open public spaces are crucial in enhancing urban areas and communities’ health and wellbeing. Public spaces can catalyse physical activity, mental wellness, social interactions, and community engagement when well-planned and maintained.”

Design Council (UK) – the Value of Public Space (by former Commission of Architecture and Built Environment) <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/the-value-of-public-space1.pdf>

“Access to good-quality, well-maintained public spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health by encouraging us to walk more, to play sport, or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment. In other words, our open spaces are a powerful weapon in the fight against obesity and ill-health.”

World Health Organization - Urban Green Space Interventions and Health

https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/librariesprovider2/euro-health-topics/environment/urban-green-space-intervention.pdf?sfvrsn=a2e135f3_1&download=true

“As green space interventions need to be considered as long-term investments, they need to be integrated within local development strategies and frameworks (e.g. urban masterplans, housing regulations, transport policies, sustainability and biodiversity strategies). This requires continued political support within local government, and the general understanding that urban green spaces go beyond environmental or ecological objectives and also deliver social and health benefits that increase the quality of life and well-being of all urban residents.”





Supporting information from previous submissions:

- We have provided submissions to previous Inquiries by the Legislative Assembly and have attached these to this submission.
- The essence of those submissions has been for Government services to be cohesive, focus on our sector in a holistic way, and seek to understand the wider value of services to the community rather than just considering services as a cost to the budget.

Who is the Community Sport Alliance?

Community Sport Alliance of the ACT (CSA) has evolved from the Coalition of Major Participation Sports ACT (COMPS ACT) - formed in 2018. The CSA is a group of ACT-based sporting organisations that strive to support, promote and advocate for improving community sport in the ACT and surrounding region.

CSA, as a collective of like-minded organisations, has engaged on the topic of the value of community sport in the ACT with other ACT-based sporting organisations and with elected representatives in the ACT Legislative Assembly over the course of this year and in previous years. The group has previously undertaken discussions with other ACT-based sporting organisations as to what a collective entity might be able to do and how best to do it.

The community 'reach' of member organisations of the Community Sport Alliance of the ACT is as follows: 93,194 participants; 4,843 teams; 69,391 school program participants; 5,044 accredited coaches; 3261 volunteer officials; 399 community clubs; and 127 employees (September 2024).

Philosophy of our Alliance

As an alliance, CSA firmly believes that sport plays a vital role throughout the nation and the ACT in terms of:

- enriching the social and cultural fabric of the community
- reducing the disease burden of physical inactivity
- creating opportunities for social connection and a sense of belonging, and helping to reduce social isolation and loneliness
- developing physical, mental and social skills, and
- enabling capability and capacity development beyond the sporting domain.

CSA strives to elevate the conversation to improve what's happening for the sector and its vast number of contributors, in particular how can community sport best be valued and supported. We believe that having a system that supports incremental improvements for the sector is key to providing shorter term operational support and optimism for a shared longer term vision.





Finally, our Alliance still advocates for three priority areas that are imperatives for gaining improvement in community sport in the ACT:

- Implementing a long-term and detailed Sport Facilities Plan
- Establishing a formal representative body for Community Sport.
- Valuing Community Sport.

Yours sincerely

Michael Brady
Executive Officer
15 December 2025

on behalf of members of the Community Sport Alliance of the ACT

Cricket ACT & Chair of Community Sport ACT – Olivia Thornton	AFL NSW/ACT – Steven Mahar
Basketball ACT – Nicole Bowles	ACT and Southern NSW Rugby Union – Craig Leseberg
Canberra Region Rugby League – Mark Vergano	Capital Football – Samantha Farrow
Hockey ACT – Rob Sheekey	Netball ACT – Sally Clark
Tennis ACT – Mark La Brooy	

