



**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: 010

Submitter: ACT Ombudsman

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**Ms Leanne Castley**

Chair

Standing Committee on Transport and City Services

ACT Legislative Assembly

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Dear Ms Castley

### **Inquiry into the provision of municipal services in Canberra**

The ACT Ombudsman welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into the provision of municipal services in Canberra.

My Office handles complaints about the actions of ACT government agencies, including those involved in the delivery of municipal services, and ACT Policing. We aim to ensure that the agencies we oversee make decisions that are transparent, lawful, fair and accountable. We also aim to improve the ACT community by helping people, resolving complaints about agencies and influencing agencies to make improvements to their processes and procedures.

Over the 2024-25 financial year, my Office received twenty-two complaints relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee's inquiry. Issues raised concerned graffiti, lighting, rubbish and waste dumping, rubbish removal, park use, playground location and trees on public and private land. The most common issue (eleven complaints) was the handling of requests to remove or trim trees.

Two of the complaints concerned changes in household waste collection services from weekly to fortnightly as part of the Food Organics and Garden Organics collection pilot program (FOGO pilot) and the impacts of this on people living with disability.

The complaints raised concerns about the accumulation of uncollected waste in a public housing complex. Some residents were not able to follow the new waste sorting processes that came with the FOGO pilot. Others were forced to deal with overflowing waste bins due to the doubling of the period between collections, with the overflow including items such as needles, nappies and adult diapers. The complaints were directed at the collective actions of the then Transport Canberra and City Services, as well as Access Canberra, and Housing ACT.

As the complaints connected to the FOGO pilot related to the underlying design of a pilot, they were not investigated but were instead considered as part of our broader oversight role. The complaints illustrate how government services, having limited resources, can tend to focus on solutions that may suit the largest parts of the community but may present challenges for minority or at-risk groups.

While it is sensible for agencies to design their service delivery models to maximise efficiency, it is important to recognise that members of the community are not all the same and government has a responsibility to ensure at-risk groups do not fall through the cracks. When designing and delivering government services, I encourage agencies to anticipate barriers to accessing their services, listen to feedback and work with the community affected to develop solutions.

Earlier this year, as ACT Ombudsman and Commonwealth Ombudsman, I published an insights paper about [removing barriers to accessing government services](#). I encourage the Committee to consider any lessons in this paper that can help to create accessible municipal services for everyone in the Canberra community.

Yours sincerely

**Iain Anderson**  
**ACT Ombudsman**