



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: 054

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Funding Walking Infrastructure Without Taxation or Debt

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The terms of reference for this inquiry include:

- The possibility of transforming Fix My Street into an application; and
- Any other related matters.

This submission outlines how to create a Fix My Street application for Walking Issues and provides a way to fund it without the ACT government having to borrow or take money from the ACT budget. The same approach can be applied to all the areas in Fix My Street. The concept is to provide apps that allow residents and visitors to the ACT to interact with government and government agencies in a seamless and easily accessible manner for all infrastructure and services. Footpaths and walking infrastructure are a good testbed for the approach.

Purpose

The main obstacle to improving walking and active travel infrastructure is not identifying needs but justifying the expenditure of tax revenue. If you have the funds, many things become possible. This submission outlines an alternative funding model in which the ACT Government requests from the Federal Government the ability to buy money rather than borrow it. Justification for the expenditure comes from the savings generated by walking.

Key Arguments

- Walking Infrastructure and active travel projects consistently struggle in budgets because they compete with tax-funded services that generate taxes.
- A more sustainable approach is for the Federal Government to sell new money for walking into circulation to build and maintain public assets.
- Local Communities would purchase money (rather than borrow it) from a community bank. The money would pay members to walk and the money collected would be spent through the ACT government to maintain and build walking infrastructure.
- A Walking for Wellness app would manage walking measurements and problem reporting and replace Fix My Street for walking issues.
- From the government's point of view, they would continue to operate as they do today, except they would receive money for walking from the communities that walk rather than the ACT Treasury.
- Economic justification comes from the fact that each km walked is estimated to save the community \$6 for each km a person walks. 10,000 people walking 2 km a day and being paid \$3 per km generate \$22,000,000 a year and save the community \$44,000,000 in health and other benefits from walking.

Implementation

1. The ACT Government, with the help of community groups, prepares a submission to the Federal Government seeking authority to buy money for active travel, beginning with Walking projects.
2. The Federal Government asks a community bank to sell an agreed amount of money to community groups to pay people to walk and administer the funds in the groups.
3. The funds paid to the community groups are given to the ACT departments to build walking assets, including the Walking for Wellness app.

“Money for Sale” Chapter References

Money for Sale (a book in progress) proposes a different way to fund community infrastructure. It suggests that the Reserve Bank and Treasury authorise banks to sell money directly to local communities, thereby introducing new money into the economy.

The book will become a practical guide for infrastructure financed with purchased, not borrowed, money.

[Read or listen to a Conversation about Money](#)

Why do we want to buy money rather than lend it to introduce money into the economy?

[Read or listen to an Algal Bloom Economy](#)

What is the benefit to the ACT government from funding public infrastructure with money purchased from the Federal Government?

[Read or listen to Funding Public Assets without Taxation](#)

What could a proposal contain?

[Read or Listen to Funding Public Walking Infrastructure](#)

How does this all appear in the ACT government accounts?

[Read or Listen to The Walking Dividend](#)

The approach removes the budget barrier to walking infrastructure. It does not increase inflation or add to ACT debt. Instead, it funds community health and wellbeing assets aligned with their true public value. The Treasury is currently grappling with how to measure a well-being economy, and the Federal Government is debating how to fund infrastructure and revitalise Australian industry. This small, affordable project offers a potential solution.

How The Community is Involved

Schools, Walking Groups, Living Streets, and Church groups can organise communities of walkers to help the government prepare a submission to the Federal Government. If permission is granted for a community bank in Canberra to sell money, the community will coordinate groups of walkers to trial the system. The funding will come from Community Banks selling money to the groups to build walking assets, including “Fix My Street” apps. If the money benefits communities, there will be no trouble getting community involvement.