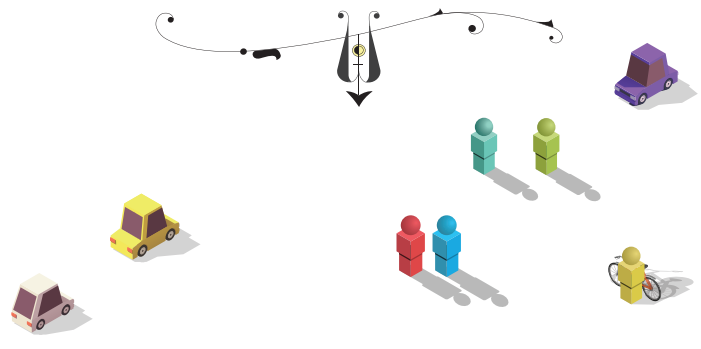




**ACT**  
Government

HAVE YOUR SAY  
ON CITY SERVICES FOR  
**BETTER SUBURBS**

**STATEMENT  
2030**



**COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAME TOGETHER AT A CITIZEN'S FORUM  
TO SET A VISION AND PRIORITIES FOR CITY SERVICES**



# INTRODUCTION

We came together over three weekends, 54 of us from across Canberra.

Some walked, some cycled, some of us car pooled.

We immersed ourselves in the work that Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) undertakes everyday to improve our lives as citizens. We committed our time, energy and passion to share our ideas about how we can make our suburbs better.

There was butchers paper. There was great debate - not always with agreement.  
There were scones.

We were brought together in our commitment and love for our city. We recognise we are a small representation of people from across our city. We are honoured to have contributed in this way.



## VISION 2030 CANBERRA

People, place and spirit in harmony.

In 2030 Canberra will be a bush city, green, vibrant and one that honours our Indigenous heritage and our history. We want it to be a place that is inclusive and that fosters community pride. Ours will be a healthy community.

We want to maintain and sustain our green and clean land, side by side with a relaxed lifestyle and the diverse culture that all people bring to our city.

## WHY ARE BETTER SUBURBS IMPORTANT?

**We acknowledge that our city of Canberra and suburbs are on the ancestral land of the Ngunnawal, [Ngarigu and Ngambri] people.**

**We acknowledge the First Australians as the Traditional Custodians of this land, whose cultures are amongst the oldest living cultures in human history. We pay our respects to the Elders of the Ngunnawal community and recognise their living culture, their strength, their resilience and their continued nurturing of this land they have done so for thousands of years.**

We recognise the planners who designed and built Canberra over the last two centuries.

By acknowledging the peoples before us we build on this commitment to people, place and spirit; creating better suburbs beyond aesthetic and towards a stronger future.

We have a strong pride in our city and its unique character. Just as Canberra is unique, every suburb has its own character, and government must engage at a local level to ensure that local communities have what they need to thrive. Our communities will continue to change over time. As the needs change, services will need to respond.

The livability of our suburbs is intertwined with our natural environment. The value of our urban forest, green spaces and waterways underpins the amenity and beauty of each of our suburbs as well as Canberra as a whole.



Better suburbs sit as the foundation of the Canberra community. Our suburbs can enable strong and resilient communities through building connection; at our playgrounds, our shops, and our green open spaces. Community connectedness and liveable suburbs can also enhance physical and mental well-being, build inclusiveness and reduce social isolation.

We want suburbs that we are proud of, that are attractive and well maintained, and safe for our citizens, both at a personal and neighborhood level.

Better suburbs deliver local and group centre shops, parks, and recreational facilities that the community can easily access via roads, pathways and public transport, including access for vulnerable people.

Our population is growing, we will experience increasing impacts of climate change, and new technologies will emerge. Our suburbs need to accommodate change and be resilient in the face of these future challenges. A green and vibrant city in 2030 needs a renewed focus on delivering services for citizens that will enhance their experiences and sense of place.

City Services does a wonderful job maintaining and improving assets across all of its service areas. However, there are opportunities to improve efficiency and integration to improve outcomes. The next challenge is to take a holistic approach that delivers solutions from the perspective of Canberra citizens and community - to create places for people to live, rather than to manage assets.

By harnessing the pride that Canberrans have in their city, by engaging citizens as partners, we together we can build better suburbs for now and into the future.

## HOW TCCS AND COMMUNITY WORK TOGETHER

This Better Suburbs Forum experience has been valuable for both community engagement and input into the work TCCS is seeking to achieve. We would like to pass on our appreciation for the opportunity for the community to be involved in this Forum.

Currently we feel that work within ACT Government generally, but also within TCCS is siloed. The siloing nature of Government is an ongoing challenge and as a result the community does not always see the positive work TCCS undertakes.

Some of the issues that have been raised throughout this Forum have included: lack of responses to those who have contacted TCCS through Access Canberra



and lack of timely and correct information being provided. Other issues raised include a general lack of awareness of the services TCCS provide to the community and how to access them.

### Our Ideas

Future engagement needs to be around the day to day experiences of the users. We need to move away from the focus of 'asset management,' to a commitment of being community focused around the use of places. This could be achieved by

- Organising quarterly meetings with a number of community/residents groups including community councils or having regular 'drop in' sessions. The Environment and Planning directorate has already adopted the model of bimonthly meetings with community and local groups. TCCS could adopt a similar model. This would demonstrate visible, active and genuine engagement;
- Holding regular community/citizens forums on various subjects e.g. Better Suburbs Citizens Forum;
- Investigating direct democracy approaches such as 'Blockchain democracies';
- Increased and varied promotion about the services TCCS provide which are available to Canberra citizens. This could include a greater presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), radio spotlight ads and/or presence on talkback radio and in libraries;



- Providing timely, accurate and informed direct responses to those contacting TCCS through 'Fix My Street' rather than providing incorrect information or no response at all;
- Methods of communication need to be tailored to people with a range of services to access that information e.g. information online needs to be quick and easy to access, but also needs to be provided in some other physical forms like leaflets in places like Canberra Connect shopfronts, libraries, etc. so that those without online access can find the information;
- The current regional 'My Canberra' pamphlets are often perceived as political advertisements because of their branding. These might be more useful if they were apolitical;
- Increased accountability by opening up fix my street data to individuals who log jobs
- Embracing the 'small town' intimacy of Canberra;
- Consider other examples of partnership e.g. ACT Health, and Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, learning lessons from other Government departments to **tear down silos**.

### The role that community play in engagement

The community has a major and emerging role in improving our suburbs. The Canberran community can play an active and dynamic role in supporting the delivery of services. The community could assist with improving our suburbs by:

- Individuals and groups taking responsibility for themselves and their immediate environment and developing a sense of community ownership;

- Engaging and participating in genuine partnership opportunities with the Government;
- Better Suburbs Forum attendees should become ambassadors for this type of work and can pass on their positive experiences and information they have gained through attendance to other parts of community

### PRIORITY SERVICE STATEMENTS

Below, are the forum's recommendations for each of the 14 Business Areas of Transport Canberra and City Services.

The 14 areas are listed below in order of urgency and importance as identified by the Better Suburbs Forum.

It is important to note that the 'Recommendation' section as provided under each of the 14 areas achieved consensus agreement by the forum members and the other sections (titled "Some ideas for changes to the current approach" and "Community involvement") reflect the breadth of the discussion over the four days.

# 1. LAKES PONDS AND WETLANDS / STORMWATER AND WATER QUALITY



## RECOMMENDATION

**Our recommendation is to increase servicing for Lakes, Ponds and Wetlands and the stormwater system.**

Of the fourteen service areas, the forum considers the increased funding in this area to be the most urgent in the short term, as well as of the greatest importance in the longer term to support the delivery of multiple outcomes.

Our lakes, wetlands, ponds and stormwater systems need to be future-proofed through a strategic increase in capital expenditure and operational funding to maintain assets and programs in this service area.

The strategy for this service area should be to deliver improved water quality, capacity to deal with the challenges associated with climate change, capacity to adequately manage volumes of stormwater runoff associated with densification, and minimisation of consequent impacts on road infrastructure.

There should be a program of increased capital works expenditure, focused on three key areas:

- renewal of existing ageing infrastructure with naturalisation of waterways to support water quality, visual amenity, and management of stormwater flows;

- implementation of water harvesting systems to support drought-proofing and as a revenue opportunity, for example replicating the Inner North Reticulation Network model across Canberra; and
- implementation of improved street sweeping technologies.

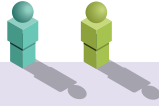
There will be a consequent increase in maintenance costs of this infrastructure, as well as the cost of an increased program of street sweeping. Some of these costs will be offset by revenues gained through the street sweeping and water harvesting programs. Reduced impact of stormwater on other infrastructure like roads will lead to other savings across the TCCS budget.

TCCS could engage with the community to achieve this recommendation through ongoing practical support of community groups. It could also continue education regarding what the community can do to support stormwater quality, and the long term benefits of the capital expenditure program.

The capital expenditure program requires community acceptance but not active community engagement. Businesses and other government areas need to be supportive of, and access opportunities related to water harvesting for this to be viable. Continued involvement by the community through groups like Landcare, Waterwatch and similar to increase community-driven awareness and education will also support improved water quality. The community will also need to co-operate with street sweeping requirements.



## 2. STREET AND PARK TREES



### RECOMMENDATION

**Our recommendation is that funding be increased and that there be a change in focus in how this funding is spent. The focus would be on tree planting and replacement to maintain and increase to cover 30% of our suburbs by 2030, leveraging community responsibility, engagement and education to do so.**

Street and park trees are important to everyone and the second most important area for people. It is an urgent issue for many people. Our current funding does not enable the maintenance of the existing 20% tree coverage goal let alone the 30% tree coverage goal recommended above.

This is important because:

- Canberra has a legacy as the 'Bush Capital';
- managing safety and risk in the community;
- improving and contributing to community health and wellbeing;
- protecting infrastructure and the natural environment; and
- protecting against climate change.

This recommendation reflects the value we place on trees across our suburbs and acknowledges our ageing urban forest. The achievement of this goal will require holistic management.

### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

TCCS should involve homeowners and body corporates in the planting and maintenance of their street trees, for example by granting new and replacement trees, providing horticulture programs in schools and at the library, and by partnering with community, schools and local Landcare groups to plant and grow new stock.

The government should return unused open spaces to urban forests.

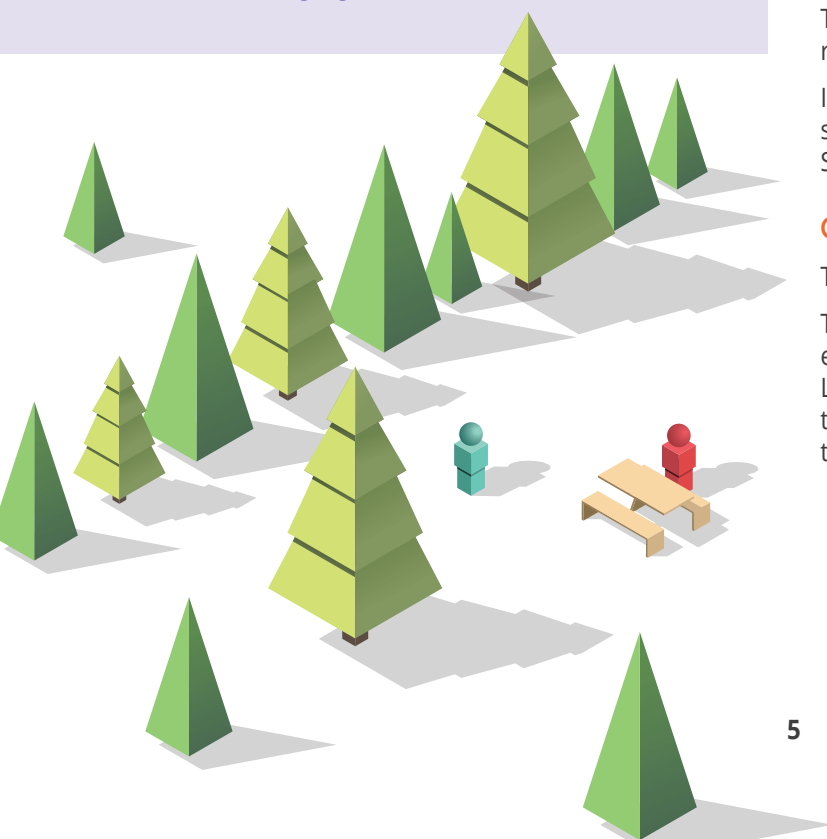
TCCS needs to reconsider the extent to which it regulates trees on private properties.

It will be important to work across directorates/silos, including with the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

### Community Involvement

The community should not damage or poison trees.

The community can provide support by building engagement, including existing groups (for example, Landcare) as well as building new groups. Street tree education could be supported by 'adopt a tree' programs.



# 3. HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING

## RECOMMENDATION

**Our recommendation is to increase servicing for household waste and recycling.**

Household Waste and Recycling was considered to be a strategic issue it was ranked as the (equal) second most urgent and important topic.

Waste management is important for reducing the impact of climate change and the preservation of limited natural resources including land. Increased options for waste management will also reduce illegal dumping on public land, which has severe consequences on the environment, public health, as well as social amenity.

With a rapidly growing population and increased urban infill, household waste is becoming an increasing problem. With limited land available in Canberra, waste disposal needs investment to expand recycling and resource recovery to reduce reliance on landfill.

Budget increases need to be proportional to the growing population.

### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

TCCS should commit to providing a bulky waste collection service for households. TCCS can investigate options including:

- offering bulky waste collection on set dates or on request, and
- expanding recycling drop-off points to allow drop-off of certain bulky waste items where feasible.

TCCS should explore options for expanding the green waste collection service. Options could include:

- allowing households to put compostable material into green waste bins;
- mandating the provision of green waste / compost bins for all apartment complexes;
- expediting the roll-out of green waste bins across Canberra;
- considering the provision of worm farms and benchtop compost bins to households; and
- subsidising the provision of green waste / bulky waste collection services and resources for low-socioeconomic demographics, particularly residents of ACT public housing.

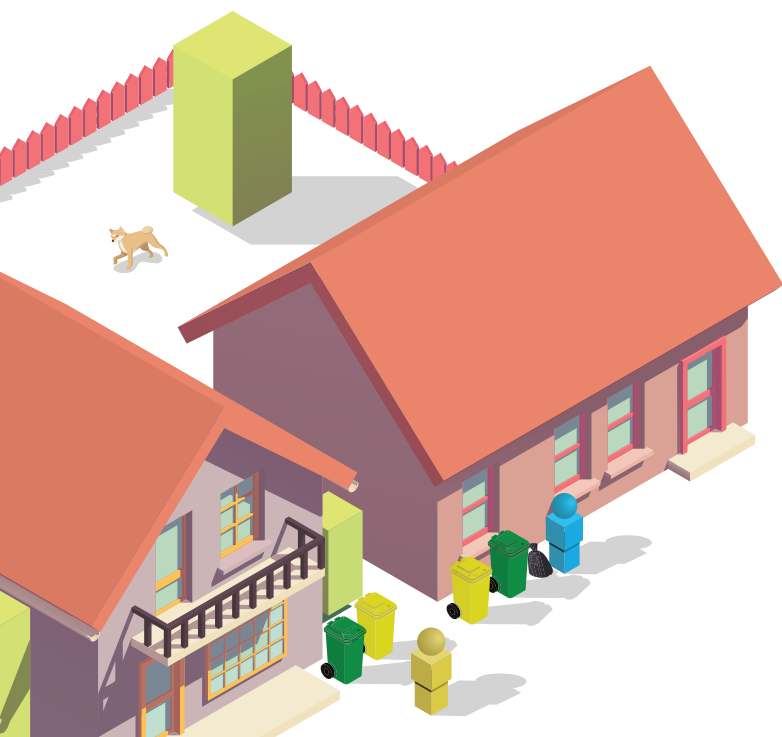
TCCS needs to consolidate the management of household and public waste services in order to find efficiency improvements.

This will support individuals to increase recycling and reduce illegal dumping, support the government to meet recycling and landfill targets, and overall increase community awareness on the importance of proper waste management.

### Community Involvement

The community can support the management of waste by actively participating and being more proactive in better managing and disposing of their own household waste.

TCCS should increase community education through schools, community councils and other organisations, libraries, workplaces, websites and social media, public advertising (e.g. buses, rubbish trucks, ACT shop fronts, shopping centres).



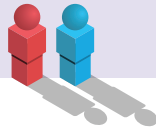
# 4. PUBLIC SPACES WASTE AND RECYCLING

(Note: Public spaces waste and recycling does not include domestic or commercial waste)

## RECOMMENDATION

**We recommend retaining the current servicing level but with a change of focus.**

The Better Suburbs Forum considered this the fourth-most urgent and important topic. With Household Waste and Recycling ranking equal second, the community considers waste management to be of a very high priority.



Waste management is important for reducing the impact of climate change and preserving limited natural resources including land. Increased options for waste management will also reduce illegal dumping on public land, which has severe consequences on the environment, public health, as well as social amenity.

This recommendation assumes that the increase in servicing level recommended for Household Waste and Recycling will assist in partially resolving illegal dumping in public spaces. Any result in savings will be invested in other TCCS activities.

### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

TCCS needs to focus on proactively addressing and reducing the root causes of illegal dumping, with particular focus on dumping by commercial entities and repeat offenders.

TCCS should consider improving the customer experience at recycling and waste centres to facilitate and encourage proper disposal.

TCCS should expand monitoring and surveillance of current hot spots for dumping to improve compliance and enforcement of penalties for offenders. Increased penalties should be considered for repeat offenders as a deterrent to dumping. This can be supported by amendments to the Litter Act.



Although the evidence does not appear to support removing tip fees as an incentive for reducing illegal dumping, TCCS should do further consultation and research to explore if the removal of tip fees may be beneficial.

TCCS should partner with the construction industry to better educate them on waste disposal and consider if there is any way to incentivise the industry to improve waste disposal.

We strongly recommend that TCCS consider functional alignment of the Household Waste and Public Waste areas. It is anticipated that these changes in focus can then be funded by the savings incurred in reduction of illegal dumping by private individuals (addressed in Household Waste and Recycling above) and by the increase in penalties for offenders.

This will reduce the expense of dealing with illegal dumping in public areas and support better long-term disposal and recycling of waste.

### Community Involvement

The community can assist by engaging with TCCS's education campaigns and taking personal responsibility for promoting proper waste disposal and reporting offenders.

TCCS can engage the community to assist with catching illegal dumpers via a "Dob-a-Dumper" program for members of the public to report illegal dumping.

TCCS should expand current initiatives to educate and inspire the community to dispose of waste and recycling appropriately.

TCCS could partner with the media to improve awareness, e.g. partnering with the ABC show "War on Waste" to use Canberra as a case study about our public spaces.



## 5. ROADS

### RECOMMENDATION

**Maintain current servicing levels and amenity and seek efficiencies through outcome-based contracting and investigating the use of new materials. Consider redirecting savings elsewhere in TCCS.**

Roads are of high strategic importance.

We have made this recommendation because the government has already invested in an asset management database and is investigating the use of new materials.

Roads are part of Canberra's critical infrastructure and maintaining them is important for safety and the operation of the city.

#### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

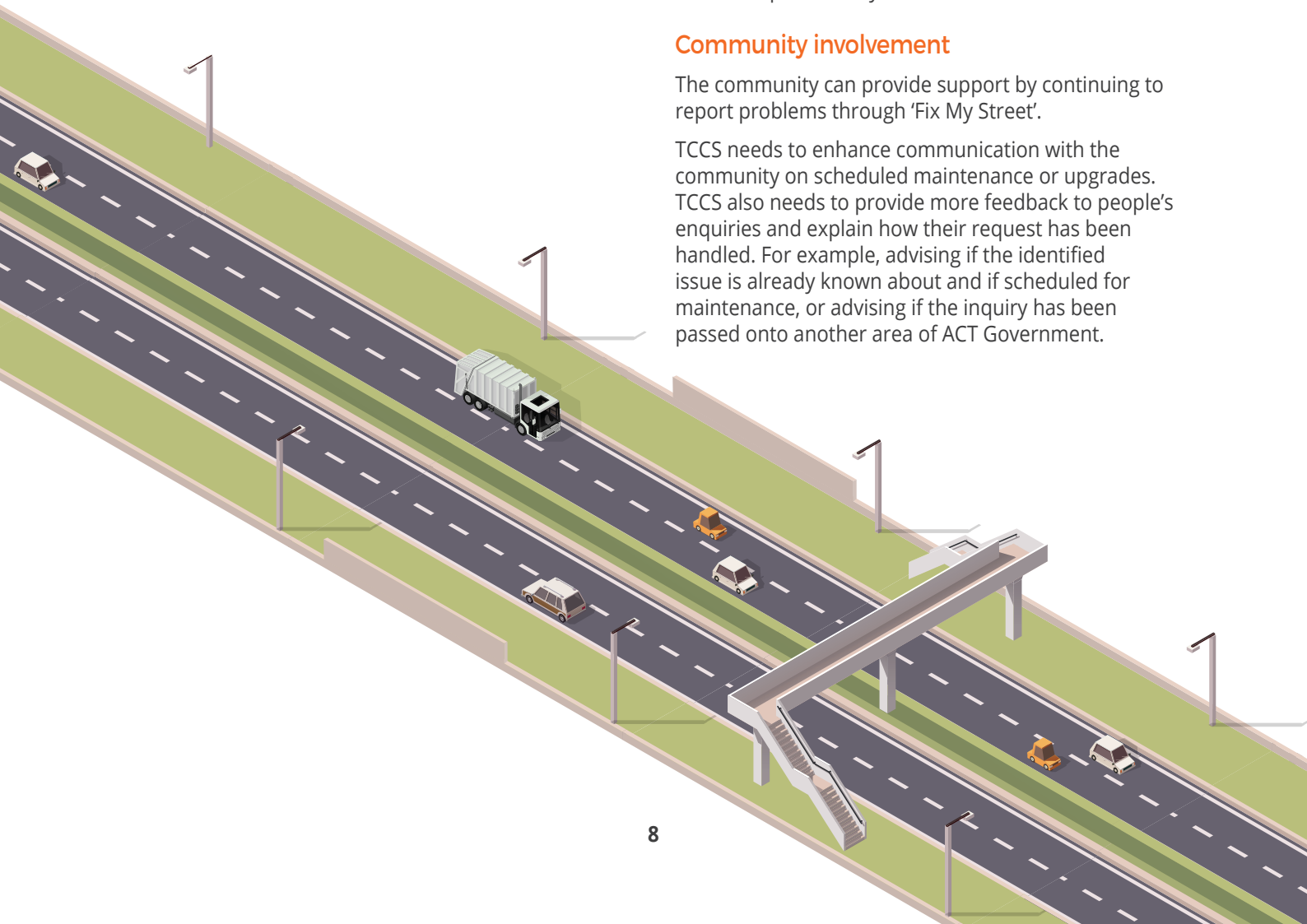
Recognising that TCCS already schedules maintenance using a risk-based approach, its business could be delivered by looking at ways to achieve better outcomes from contracts and ways to reduce impacts on the city's productivity.

This will achieve the continued maintenance of a safe road network to support the city's connectivity and economic productivity.

#### Community involvement

The community can provide support by continuing to report problems through 'Fix My Street'.

TCCS needs to enhance communication with the community on scheduled maintenance or upgrades. TCCS also needs to provide more feedback to people's enquiries and explain how their request has been handled. For example, advising if the identified issue is already known about and if scheduled for maintenance, or advising if the inquiry has been passed onto another area of ACT Government.





## 6. PUBLIC SPACES (PARKS AND OPEN SPACES) INCLUDING MOWING



### RECOMMENDATION

**An increase in funding to services, with some change in focus.**

The majority of forum members considered this important but not urgent.

We broke this area into three parts: parks, open spaces and mowing.

#### Parks

Parks are green urban parks which include amenities for recreation, BBQs and toilets. Parks would get an increase in funding.

TCCS should review whether or not parks needs to be rationalised. We would like to see better and more high-quality parks in better locations.

TCCS should publicise the booking system for functions and events.

#### Open Spaces

An open space is an area of land which isn't developed, such as footpaths in between houses, and which is accessible to the public. TCCS servicing of these open spaces would be kept the same.

Note that Landcare groups help maintain open spaces and need close communication with TCCS to ensure they are working towards the same goal.

#### Mowing

Mowing only includes the mowing of parks and open spaces. TCCS should plan for surge capacity and flexibility in the mowing schedule to adapt to changes in weather patterns and seasons (particularly as the climate changes). Mowing is a clear priority and, although we expect this could be covered in existing budget, we must be prepared to boost funding as required to ensure safety and useability (parks in particular).

Mowing is an important priority for amenity and safety. A clear mowed area may discourage illegal dumping.

#### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

Parks, open spaces, ovals and playspaces should be considered together in terms of planning and coordination (i.e. a place-based approach). TCCS needs to ensure that parks in general have short enough grass to facilitate amenity, general safety (e.g. snakes and rubbish) and fire protection.

TCCS should review the placement of BBQs and limit their installation to larger parks and high-use areas. Toilets should be increased and co-located with high-use areas and playgrounds.

Waste management should be maintained at the current level and included in the public waste function. There should be an increase in education about litter to ensure that litter is reduced in parks and open spaces.

Open spaces promote better physical and mental health. Parks are a social meeting place for the community. Poor servicing can be an environmental risk if not maintained. Well maintained and mowed open spaces promote the enjoyment of other facilities. Parks and open spaces are fundamental to the character of Canberra (the 'Bush Capital'). They are also an important carbon sink for ameliorating climate change.

There is a need for more facilities including toilets, benches and shading to make park experiences appealing and to cater for all ages and abilities. Clustering facilities in higher-use areas will facilitate maintenance efficiency and improve the quality, function and accessibility of the space. Other non-park open spaces are adequately maintained as is and just need mowing for safety.

#### Community Involvement

The community plays an important role in looking after parks and amenities and ensuring that they are used and taken care of.

TCCS needs to be responsive to 'Fix My Street' enquiries and let people know how their enquiry has been received and how it has been actioned.

# 7. LIBRARY SERVICES

## RECOMMENDATION

**We recommend maintaining the current level of funding.**

Investment in libraries is not urgent but libraries are important to us in the long term.

ACT Libraries have demonstrated the ability to provide innovative services with existing funding. Libraries provide an important community service to connect people with each other and ideas.

Maintaining this funding will ensure continued access to the range of services provided by ACT Libraries to all Canberrans, regardless of circumstances.

All Canberrans, particularly those in vulnerable and minority communities, will continue to enjoy the opportunities for lifelong learning, socialisation, skills improvement and language learning that the library environment offers.

## Some ideas for changes to the current approach

We should see libraries continuing to evolve their services, programs and facilities in line with their current commitment to innovation. To provide ongoing access to these, TCCS should consider whether libraries are best located to service the local community.

TCCS should consider rationalisation/consolidation of libraries in more accessible locations.

It would help community groups could access meeting rooms at libraries into the evening.

## Community Involvement

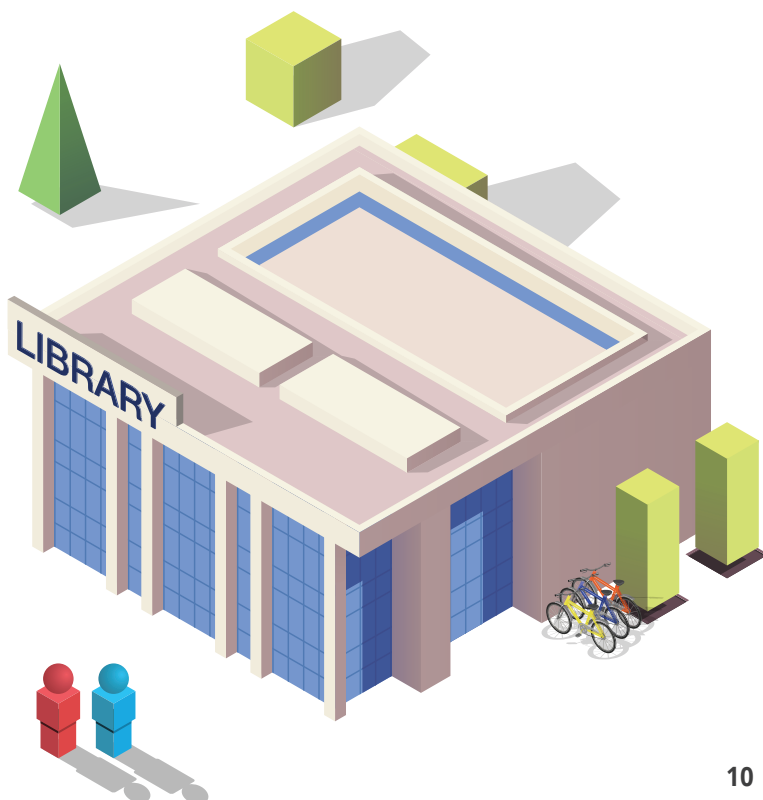
Libraries will continue to foster a sense of involvement in the wider community through the provision of low cost and accessible meeting spaces.

The community should actively provide feedback to libraries on the demand for and quality of library services and promote the range of services and facilities available to their friends and family.

The community can assist the elderly, less advantaged and non-native speakers of English by volunteering through their local library, noting that core library services must always be provided by permanent staff and professional librarians.

Many Canberrans are unaware of the range of digital and non-traditional resources that libraries make available to the community. TCCS should make efforts to increase community awareness of these resources.

There is a demand in the community to assist libraries directly. TCCS should explore the establishment of a Library Foundation through the Greater Good Program framework.



## 8. FOOTPATHS VERGES AND NATURE STRIPS

### RECOMMENDATION

**That funding levels for footpaths, verges and nature strips remain unchanged but that TCCS respond to the changing demands of Canberra's population, its changing distribution and technological innovation.**

Investment in footpaths and verges is not urgent but is important to us on a continuing basis in the long term.

This is important because verge and nature strip health provides significant ecological benefit, preventing erosion, road damage and helps to mitigate severe urban temperature effects.

The mental and physical health of Canberrans is greatly enhanced by their neighbourhood being readily and safely accessed. We encourage any change in practice or establishment that enables more active travel options.

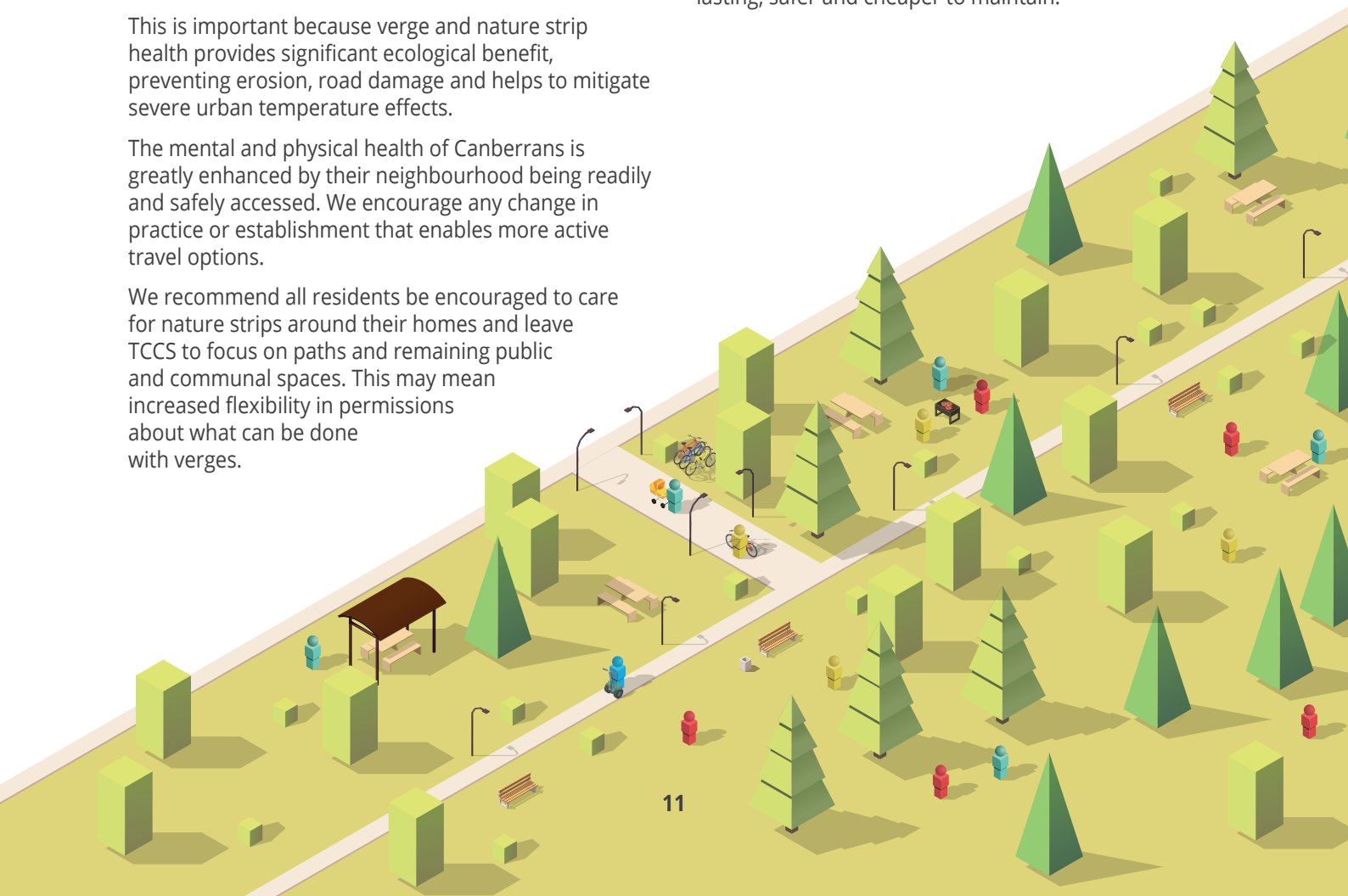
We recommend all residents be encouraged to care for nature strips around their homes and leave TCCS to focus on paths and remaining public and communal spaces. This may mean increased flexibility in permissions about what can be done with verges.

Where there is an opportunity to develop or redevelop an area, we recommend TCCS embrace new technologies, for example imprinted concrete and recycled materials and meet current Australian Design Standards. In these circumstances we also recommend integrating the construction of footpaths and cycle paths into the road system.

We recommend TCCS pursue outcomes rather than output-based contracts.

We have made this recommendation because we acknowledge that the population is growing and ageing, and that our infrastructure is ageing. We want to move through suburbs that are green and safe without relying on our vehicles.

The impending end-of-life for much of the existing infrastructure is an opportunity to change practice from business as usual to the embrace of new techniques and practice that may be longer lasting, safer and cheaper to maintain.



## Some ideas for changes to the current approach

We would suggest that TCCS should make the following changes to how they deliver their business with regard to footpaths and verges:

- undertake a detailed cost/benefit analysis of construction materials and methods;
- consider the role of drones and remote sensing in inspection and assessment;
- analysis of the potential for power-generating pavement for high-traffic areas;
- prioritising suburbs and regions with ageing populations (for footpaths) and young populations (for dual-use paths);
- examination of design requirements to maintain mobility and accessibility for an ageing population, and
- continued maintenance of nature strips and verges with adaptation for an evolving climate and ecosystem response.

The benefits of taking this action will be to:

- maintain public safety, accessibility and amenity;
- use appropriate design and construction methodology for increased volume and intensity of foot traffic as population increases, and
- maintain the aesthetic and ecological character of Canberra's suburbs and their livability.

## Community involvement

The community can support this initiative by taking more responsibility for nature strip and verge maintenance, tree planting and responsible parking.

TCCS could improve how it engages with the community by providing more advice to residents about how the verges and nature spaces could be maintained by citizens.

They could also partner with existing groups such as Greening Australia, community gardening societies etc, to avoid duplication of effort.



# 9. GRAFFITI AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## RECOMMENDATION

**We recommend maintaining current funding levels.**

Management of graffiti is not urgent but it is important.

We consider graffiti to include tagging and other antisocial imagery on public buildings. We consider street art to be murals and other endorsed decorative art.

We have made this recommendation because street art and community engagement provide a service that is beneficial to the community and TCCS is doing really well with what they have.

There are good and positive benefits from the current efforts in engagement and diversion such as reducing vandalism and contributing to the vibrancy of the city.

The aesthetic value of street art makes Canberra beautiful and interesting. TCCS program meets community expectations around eliminating tagging and provides restorative justice and diversion for offenders.

### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

There should be minimal changes to this valuable and innovative community program.

There should be increased communication to:

- educate the community about the benefits of the program;
- inform artists about opportunities available; and
- seek opportunities from business and private community members for fence and wall space.

### Community Involvement

The community can provide support through community-driven art events and projects, by providing private property boundary walls and fences for art space, and through corporate sponsorship of public art.

Community engagement is already a strength of this program.

Ideas for other community engagement include:

- a “design a mural” competition - linked to an event eg Floriade; and
- providing information about the street art program in local member flyers and other government communication avenues.



# 10. STREETLIGHTS

## RECOMMENDATION

**We are recommending that the level of servicing remain unchanged.**

Management of streetlights is not urgent but it is important.

A streetlight network that is compliant with Australian Standards is important for ensuring public safety. Streetlights are important for maintaining safety for a range of road users (motorists and cyclists), community path safety (cyclists and pedestrians). Streetlights in public spaces improve the perception of safety and reduce crime, and encourage community accessibility to public space at night.

We have made this recommendation because the existing seven year contract for the maintenance of streetlights will upgrade most of the 80,000 streetlights to energy efficient LEDs.

No change in funding is recommended because after the end of the current contract, the maintenance costs should be reduced.

The maintenance cost savings will then be available to be used for an expanded infill program.

### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

TCCS should prioritise lighting infill requests beyond just considerations of public safety and broaden the urban infill program to areas of high use and new use.

Doing this will:

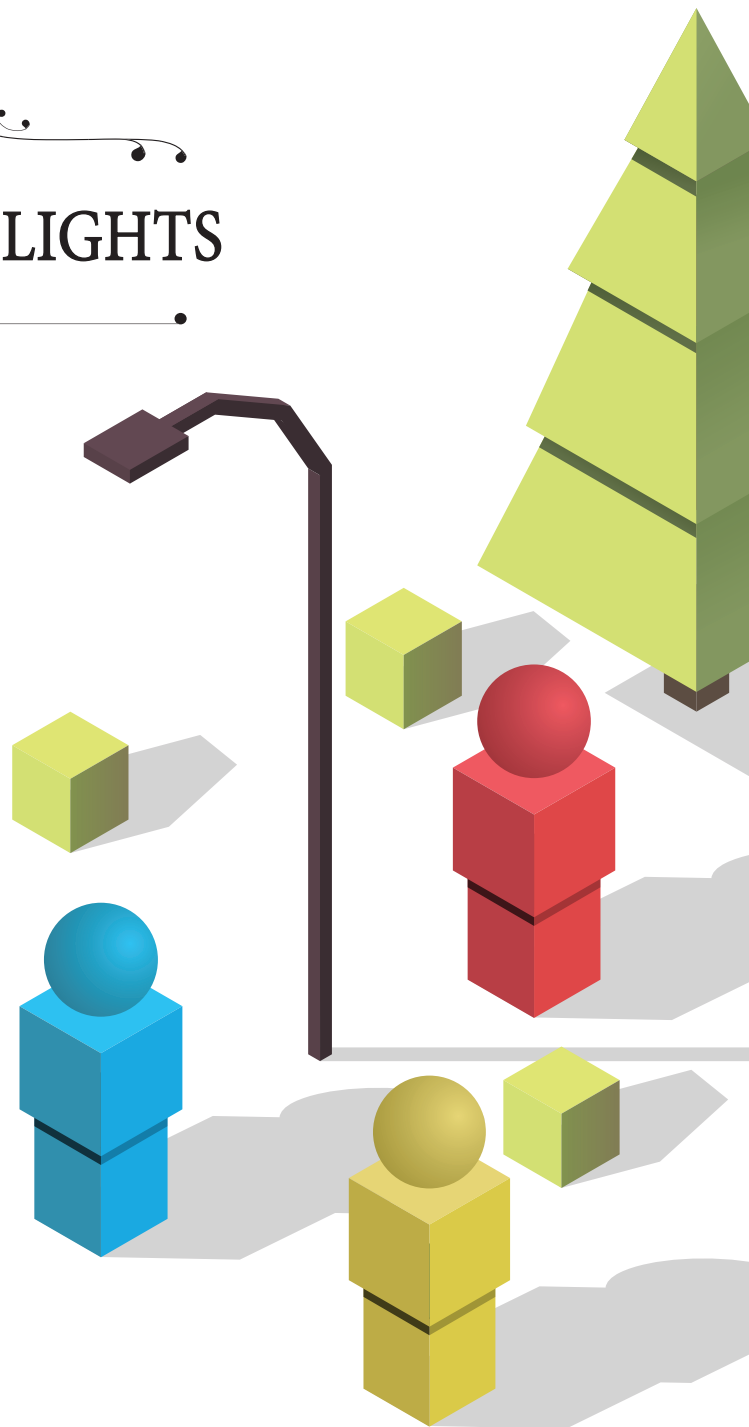
- improve personal safety;
- improve visibility for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, and
- improve use of public spaces at night.

### Community Involvement

The community can support this approach by not damaging streetlights.

TCCS's service is currently defined by upgrading lights and ensuring a 95% operational rate. TCCS needs to engage with the community to discuss other operational considerations such as potentially reducing hours of operation and also operating the streetlights to reduce light pollution and energy consumption.

TCCS needs to improve communication with the community on scheduled maintenance or upgrades and outages.



# 11. PLAYSACES

## RECOMMENDATION

**Our recommendation is to NOT increase the level of service (funding), but to change the focus.**

We consider that the focus should be on quality over quantity in playspaces and that we should use the existing budget to concentrate efforts on a smaller range of better facilities.

The general consensus of the forum is that this is an important but not urgent priority.

Community sentiment gathered through this forum has found that there is a strong preference for quality over quantity, that some of the existing playspaces are not fit for purpose and are under-utilised.

### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

This would involve decreasing the amount of local play equipment (while maintaining the green space) but upgrading other central community and regional playgrounds. Retaining fewer but larger playgrounds would accommodate a broader range of children, as well as providing amenity for other community users, such as by providing or utilising existing shading (particularly trees and natural shading) and seating.

The playgrounds that are to be retained and potentially upgraded should be located near shops, ovals and toilets. Consider re-modeling small playspaces with natural materials and equipment requiring less / no maintenance and safety checking.

New playspaces should be designed to be near other facilities and close to public transport and

parking spaces where possible. This would facilitate accessibility and minimise the risk of impact on disadvantaged people if some local equipment is removed or focused to natural low maintenance.

This is important because TCCS has limited operational budget to maintain the number of existing playgrounds. Playground are very important places for families as well as different sectors of the community. While recognising that the number of playgrounds may be reduced by this recommendation, it is critical that the amenity, social benefit and community connectivity of these public spaces are maintained.

This will achieve increased usage and enjoyment by a broader age range of the community. It will better cater for the very old, very young and everyone in between - with particular focus on children and their parents and carers (the main patrons of playspaces).

### Community Involvement

The community can provide support through a continued focus on user responsibility for maintaining the amenity of the playground, such as through simple actions like not leaving litter behind. Community groups or regular park users could be encouraged to 'adopt a park', to create a sense of collective responsibility for these common assets.

TCCS should publicise the results of the recent playspaces reports and let the public know in advance of the intention to change focus and how this will be of benefit as the city, environment and population changes into the future.





## 12. SHOPPING CENTRE EXPERIENCE - MAINTENANCE, PARKING, PATHS, TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

### RECOMMENDATION

**We recommend no change to current funding levels with a change of focus to direct resources based on identification of the changing needs of the community and with consideration of demographics and commercial circumstances. Vital to this change of focus is ensuring community consultation to assess support for change and new shopping centre developments.**

This area is of moderate importance and low priority.

Responding to issues like population changes and urban infill enables current services and safety standards at existing shopping centres to be maintained. Densification may help to naturally rejuvenate shopping centres.

We recognise that the city is changing, and we need to align development with changing community needs. We need a strategic long-term consultation process to address changing demographics in order to meet community needs.

#### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

TCCS should conduct reviews of shopping centres to understand community needs and identify a program of work. These may include toilets, baby change facilities, pop up shops and mini festivals.

Any new or redeveloped shopping centres should be designed as community hubs. Creating a community focus and a place to meet enables a unique community identity to be formed and, if well executed, can enhance community cohesiveness.

#### Community Involvement

There needs to be early engagement with the community at the design stage of shopping centre upgrades. It is important to consider community requirements from the start.

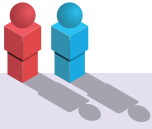
A range of community consultations should be held to ensure that everyone has a chance to comment, for example through pop-up consultations at shops and website feedback.

The community should participate in meaningful consultation processes on the design of future or redeveloped shops.

TCCS should explore ongoing options around partnership with business, building and shop owners to improve the quality of local neighbourhood shops.



# 13. RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP



## RECOMMENDATION

**Our recommendation is for no change to current resourcing, but a change of focus.**

This area is of moderate importance and low priority.

This recommendation is being made due to issues raised by both the government and community members that the data the government currently has is outdated and inaccurate for cat and dog ownership in Canberra with the current lifetime registration scheme.

There is an opportunity to become a leader in responsible pet ownership in Australia; through enforcement and reducing costs to government by reaffirming partnerships with other pet service providers.

### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

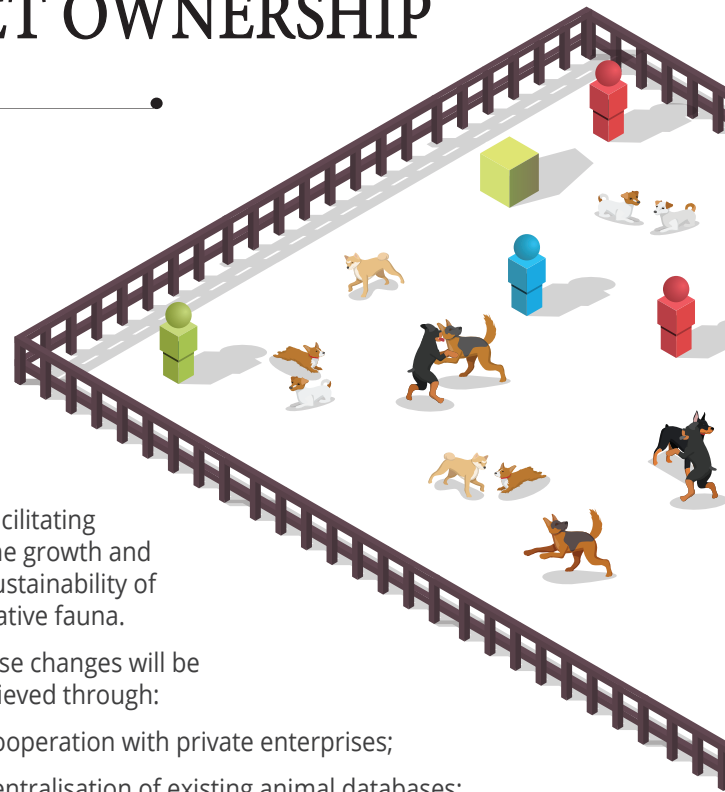
The current situation in the ACT is that dogs are registered for life and cats are not registered at all. It is suggested that a system for annual registration of dogs and cats be introduced.

This would enable the establishment of a centralised government database of cats and dogs to assist and enforce pet ownership responsibilities.

All new suburbs developed must be cat containment suburbs, and TCCS should develop a planned rollout of cat containment for Canberra's older suburbs.

This change in focus is to promote responsible pet ownership in Canberra and aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- improved community safety;
- improved data collection and record keeping on pets held within the ACT;
- improved services to recover lost pets;
- improved efficiency of regulatory costs; and



- facilitating the growth and sustainability of native fauna.

These changes will be achieved through:

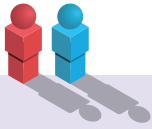
- cooperation with private enterprises;
- centralisation of existing animal databases;
- education and enforcement of responsible pet ownership;
- an online mechanism to record and respond to pet incidents;
- establishment of an annual registration for cats and dogs; and
- removal of pet restrictions in commercial areas and workplaces.

There should be a clear transition process from lifetime to annual registration. There should also be a clear explanation of why the changes are taking place and what the registration fees are being used for, to facilitate compliance and a smooth transition.

There needs to be a focus on:

- education about responsible pet ownership and relevant laws;
- better enforcement of the regulation in way which respects the community, with amnesties to encourage compliance, for example through:
  - getting the owner to agree to register and microchip their pet rather than taking it to the pound; or
  - providing a timeframe, no more than 12 months, to complete registration and micro-chipping.
- developing a mechanism for community members to report incidents relating to pet owner responsibilities/dog attacks.

# 14. COMMUNITY OVALS AND FITNESS STATIONS



## RECOMMENDATION

**We recommend that there be a decrease in servicing and a change in focus.**

This is considered to be of a low urgency and of moderately high importance.

Community ovals are utilised by a range of sporting groups, however the cost of watering under-utilised ovals will be a significant ongoing challenge.

### Some ideas for changes to the current approach

The community forum recommends that ovals need to be improved with complementary facilities such as more seating, lighting, fences, trees and playground equipment. The community forum also recognised that there may be scope to reduce the level of maintenance of ovals, such as by reducing watering which is a significant cost, or by generating revenue from sporting or fitness groups. This revenue could be put towards additional seating and upgrades to current ovals.

The benefits of this approach include:

- improved utilisation and efficiency of oval space;
- reduced irrigation costs;
- increased community participation; and
- improved accessibility to those in higher-density residences.

There would be significant benefits of co-locating future ovals with shopping centres and other community facilities such as toilets. This design may also achieve maintenance cost efficiencies for TCCS.

### Community Involvement

Unused ovals could be repurposed for communal gardening opportunities and urban forest.

The community could pay for and choose what it wants in these spaces, while TCCS would provide regulatory oversight to ensure standards and specifications are met for safety and sustainability.

TCCS could engage with the community through:

- introducing an 'adopt an oval' program for decommissioned ovals;
- repurposing decommissioned oval space for communal/botanical gardens/parks where nearby residents can decide and implement their own creations;
- continuing to maintain fitness stations, but limiting implementation to district playspaces;
- utilising oval space for informal market events;
- considering the decommissioning and converting significantly underused oval spaces;
- providing regulatory oversight to ensure standards and specifications are met for safety and sustainability;
- increasing sport hire fees to offset water usage costs for heavily utilised oval spaces; and
- considering fitness group sponsorships from private enterprises.





## WHY WE NEED A BETTER SUBURBS STATEMENT

Having a vision and future priorities for city servicing in the ACT is important.

We want to ensure that sustainable services are delivered that suit our growing population and our changing community needs.

This statement reflects the community view on key servicing issues and sets a vision for future servicing improvements.

It was written by 54 members of a Citizen's Forum, hosted in Canberra on 21 July, 4/5 August and 18/19 August 2018.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION



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