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## 2017-18 ACT BUDGET PRIORITIES

The Friends of Hawker Village is an apolitical community-based organisation, its objects and purposes being:

- to protect and enhance the residential, suburban, social and environmental qualities of the Hawker commercial precinct, known as Hawker Village, and its catchment area comprising Hawker, Page, Scullin and Weetangera; and
- to provide a forum for the discussion of matters of interest to persons and groups interested in and affected by changes to land uses in the Hawker catchment area.

The following Budget priorities for 2017-18 have been identified:

1. **Prompt, regular maintenance and repair of ageing footpaths** – Hawker, Page, Scullin and Weetangera are blessed with an excellent system of footpaths that facilitate and encourage walking. These suburbs are now around fifty years old and the footpaths suffer from ageing concrete and displacement of slabs by tree roots as well as destruction by heavy vehicles. The Government's desire to encourage active travel is not reflected in the current lack of funding provided for existing infrastructure. Our footpaths are now hazardous and we seek better funding for better maintenance along with a public education campaign to reduce damage from parking and driving on footpaths.
2. **Better quality resurfacing of roads and repair of potholes** – It is common for resurfaced roads to deteriorate and for potholes to reappear with a few months of supposedly being fixed. This suggests that the repair work was substandard. To avoid unnecessary work and effectively wasting taxpayers' money, adequate funding needs to be provided to ensure that repairs are undertaken by qualified, competent contractors.
3. **Provision of bus shelters along Coulter Drive and on Gillespie Street, northern side, near the intersection with Springvale Drive** – These bus stops, which are used regularly for local services and by people catching the bus to work, offer no protection from the elements. In wet weather, cold weather, windy weather and extreme heat, bus passengers are provided with nothing more than a bench. Improving basic comfort for waiting passengers is an important aspect of encouraging residents and visitors to use ACTION bus services.
4. **Provision of public toilets in all local shops** – As with the need to repair and maintain footpaths, the provision of well-located public toilets is an essential public service to encourage active travel/walking, especially for children and older residents. Scullin and Cook recently were honoured with a new toilet block each but there are none in Weetangera or Page;
5. **Updated playground equipment in Ellen Clark Park, Weetangera (between Belconnen Way and Smith Street)** – The existing playground equipment is very aged and minimal in its appeal to children. Greater use of this facility would be encouraged by its being updated;

6. **Beautification of the grassy area behind the Hawker toilet block** – This is the only green area around the Hawker Centre. Unfortunately, it has been despoiled and made unusable by the installation of unkempt and unsightly charity bins. This area is immediately opposite housing and would benefit from some small expenditure to improve its appearance, preferably including the removal of the bins to a more appropriate site.
7. **Replacement of the concrete monolith for public notices at the Hawker shops** – Something more functional and sheltered from the weather and in a more central location, such as the public central plaza area, is needed;
8. **Funding for a Community Planning Advocate** - At present, an imbalance exists between the resources available to developers and the Government, and to members of the community (both individuals and voluntary community organisations) in relation to planning and development issues. Even members of the community who serve on master planning reference groups have no access to impartial professional expertise to help them assess planning and development proposals. To ensure full and fair community participation in planning, individuals and organisations need not only to be 'consulted' but they need to have the capacity to understand and assess the details and implications of often complex proposals. A Community Planning Advocate could serve a valuable role in helping to redress the current imbalance in relation to both master planning and specific development applications. Consideration of such a role could be included in the context of an independent review of the ACT's planning processes.

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**Before lodging this submission, we were required to complete the ACT Government's online budget survey which is included below.**

## **Submitting your views**

### **Points to consider**

In providing your input, your suggestions should consider the objective of balancing spending against the identification of responsible savings and/or revenue generation. The questions below are aimed at guiding you through this process.

Please consider these points:

- What services do you believe are most important for the Territory?
- How can the ACT Government deliver current services more efficiently and productively?

- Are there particular services that you consider the ACT Government should stop delivering or perhaps should deliver in a different way?
- Are there any new ways to generate revenue and/or services you consider that the community should make a direct contribution to (a fee for service)?
- What are your views on the ACT Government's taxation reforms, noting that its main objective is to replace inefficient taxes (such as conveyances and insurance premiums) with an efficient land-based tax?
- Is there any infrastructure that the ACT Government should consider initiating in the next four years?

**Please Note:**

- You are also welcome to lodge a separate submission after completing the required fields of the survey. Once your input has been submitted, you will receive an email address that you can forward your submission to.
- This ACT Budget Consultation is an opportunity to provide your views about revenue and expenditure priorities. It is not a process for organisations to request funding assistance.

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## Start the Detailed Budget Survey here

Is this feedback confidential? Required

Please check this box to reflect whether your feedback is to be treated as Confidential. Copies of Confidential feedback will only be provided under limited distribution arrangements to relevant ACT Directorate(s) and to relevant ACT Government Ministers. Confidential feedback will not be made publicly available and will not appear on the Budget Consultation Website. If you want to provide both confidential and non-confidential feedback you will need to complete two separate surveys.

- Yes, it's confidential
- No, it can be made public

**Please provide a brief summary of your suggestion.**

The ACT Government has long had a policy to encourage active travel and use of public transport. To date, the Budget has largely focussed on funding relevant infrastructure in new areas and in areas of renewal. The excellent infrastructure inherited from before self government has been largely neglected. Current activity in repairing footpaths and roads is welcome but inadequate in quality and range, largely due to funding being inadequate for the need.

**What services do you believe are most important for the Territory?**

Those which assist residents to move around all parts of the Territory in a prompt, efficient manner.

Effective and timely, adequately-resourced hospital care.

An education system that overcomes disadvantage and supports teachers.

**How can the Government deliver current services more efficiently and productively?**

The move to use of contractors and consultants seems to have resulted in a loss of expertise within government. It is not obvious that an equivalent skill base has been developed within government to draft and monitor contracts for quality of outcome. The result appears to be a loss of efficiency and productivity in the delivery of services. Any savings through use of contractors tends to be offset by decline in standard of product, with the impression that the community is paying more for less.

**Are there particular services that you consider the Government should stop delivering or perhaps should deliver in a different way?**

N/A

**Are there any new ways to generate revenue and/or services you consider that the community should make a direct contribution to (a fee or service)?**

Drivers of vehicles parked or driven on nature strips and footpaths should be subject to fines to compensate for the damage they do to this public infrastructure. This is already illegal but rarely policed. It is also encouraged by densification that results in inadequate or inconvenient onsite parking.

**What are your views on the Government's taxation reforms, noting that its main objective is to replace inefficient taxes (such as conveyances and insurance premiums) with an efficient land-based tax?**

It is not clear in what way the land-based tax is efficient other than in simplifying collection of funds. Focussing all revenue sources on one area, namely land, disadvantages those on lower incomes who do not indulge in regular use of conveyancing and insurance or other such sources. There is a difference between a tax that is fair and a tax that is efficient.

**Is there any infrastructure that the Government should consider initiating in the next four years?**

A program for good quality repair of all roads and footpaths, especially those in suburbs older than forty years.