



Covering  
Page  
Scullin  
Weetangera  
Hawker

P.O. Box 4082  
HAWKER ACT 2614  
[secretary@friendsofhawkervillage.com](mailto:secretary@friendsofhawkervillage.com)  
0435 534 998

[budgetconsultation@act.gov.au](mailto:budgetconsultation@act.gov.au)

## **2020-21 ACT BUDGET PRIORITIES**

Friends of Hawker Village Inc. is a voluntary community group active within the four suburbs around the Hawker Group Centre, namely Page, Scullin, Hawker and Weetangera. Our focus is maintenance and enhancement of residential amenity locally and Canberra-wide. We welcome the opportunity to contribute our thoughts on how the ACT Government should invest in services and infrastructure to ensure that Canberra provides a high level of residential amenity to its population (whilst being mindful of broader issues such as climate change).

### **WATER**

Access to water is fundamental to good health and wellbeing and plays a large part in the lifestyle Canberrans currently enjoy. Despite efforts to ensure adequate water supply for the ACT, we note that as at 4 October 2019 combined dam level are at 54.55 %. Since 2017 there has been a downward trend in dam levels which threatens our quality of life. We live in an arid environment and evidence points to prolonged drought conditions due to climate change. We urge the ACT government to not be complacent and to plan for increased water storage to meet community expectations. This is particularly necessary because of the Government's policy to increase our population. To maintain Canberra's claim to being the garden city and a liveable city, residents need access to water to maintain grass and trees to offset the heat island effect of intensive development.

### **HEALTH CARE**

We would like expenditure to occur so that the ACT has state-of-the-art treatments for patients who have suffered a stroke. These treatments are time-critical and should be available 24/7 in the ACT. It should not be necessary to transfer stroke patients interstate to receive appropriate care.

The Calvary Public Hospital does not have the staff to provide paediatric care. With the growth of Gungahlin we believe that Calvary Emergency Department should have the staff and equipment to treat babies and children without the need for transfer to Canberra Hospital.

Another matter of great concern is the inability of emergency departments to cope with demand for their services and provide treatment within best practice timeframes. It is quite alarming to hear reports that emergency departments have to invoke 'by-pass' measures to cope with everyday demand especially during the winter months. It is also of concern that patients are routinely waiting in hallways for a treatment space. During this time they are under the care of ambulance staff which detracts from their ability to respond to emergency situations. Building new facilities is not helpful if there is not sufficient staff to care for patients. Along with the expanded facilities, the ACT needs to recruit more staff and improve retention rates.

## SCHOOLS

In the four suburbs surrounding the Hawker Shopping Centre there has been growth in demand for primary education. Many years ago, the Page Primary School was demolished and the Scullin Primary School now operates as an Early Learning Centre providing primary education for Years Kindergarten to 2. This puts pressure on enrolments for Weetangera and Hawker primary schools (and Florey Primary) where enrolments are approaching capacity. Whilst we appreciate that economies of scale reduces overheads, it is at the expense of providing what we believe is the very high value placed on attending a smaller local primary school. We suggest that consideration be given to enabling Scullin school to accept students through to year 6 and that Page and Scullin students have priority enrolment to Scullin Primary thus taking pressure off enrolments at Hawker and Weetangera.

## BUS SHELTERS

The ACT government encourages the use of public transport. The new bus timetables can mean a long wait between bus services. We would like to see increased expenditure on the provision of effective bus shelters to encourage more people to use public transport.

## PUBLIC TOILETS

Currently, not every local shopping centre has a public toilet. To make walking a preferred method of transport we believe every shopping centre should provide access to a public toilet. We also request the installation of public toilets in all parks (other than pocket parks) to encourage families to pursue outdoor activities with their children. We understand that Denman Prospect park was constructed without the provision of a public toilet as was the new play area on Lake Burley Griffin (near Commonwealth Avenue Bridge). It should be a requirement that areas for social gatherings have a public toilet facility.

## ENFORCEMENT OF VERGE MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS

The long-awaited verge management provisions have been determined and guidelines for use of residential nature strips have been published. Over the last decade, we have observed a decline in the willingness of lessees of residential blocks to appropriately maintain nature strips. We believe this is likely due to the price of water and the reluctance to mow grass, which has negatively impacted the streetscapes with open frontages that were a feature of Canberra suburbs particularly in long-established residential areas. The

guidelines provide some compromise to relieve residents of the maintenance burden; however, the guidelines will be of little use if there is no incentive to comply. In our local areas there is, in many cases, excessive use of compacted gravel and sometimes bricks to create low maintenance frontages which are often used for parking. On even gently-sloping ground, erosion of the gravel nature strip results in loose gravel on adjoining footpaths and roads, posing a slipping risk to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as ultimately ending up in the stormwater drainage system.

We welcome the guidelines but, for them to be useful, there needs to be funding for enforcement. Similarly, there needs to be funding to enforce parking regulations with regard to verges and median strips.

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute,

*[Original signed]*

Colin Lyons,  
Convenor  
Friends of Hawker Village Incorporated