



Chief Minister and Territory Directorate
2018-19 Detailed Budget Consultation
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Dear Chief Minister

Budget submission 2018-19

The Friends of Manuka Pool would like to make a submission in relation to the 2018-19 budget for consideration by the ACT Government.

Manuka Pool and its lawns are frequented by more than 32,000 visitors each season with a mix of regular lap swimmers, teenagers and families from across all of Canberra, and international and interstate visitors. The heritage-listed pool and lawns have a place in the heart of many Canberrans and is the backyard for many of its patrons. However, the pool is an aging facility that needs significant investment on top of ongoing maintenance to protect its heritage values and ensure it is in a good state now and for future generations of Canberrans. The unique pool buildings require a significant budget commitment.

In your request for budget submissions one of the questions asked is *what services are most important for the Territory* – we strongly believe Manuka Pool is an important facility for several reasons; it offers a green space in a city where increased densification needs to be matched with the provision and maintenance of social and green spaces (Kingston is one of the most densely populated suburbs in Canberra), it provides an active space which assists with the physical and mental health of Canberrans and it provides a unique swimming experience that is available in very few places across Australia. We believe Manuka Pool holds its own with pools such as the North Sydney Pool and the Melbourne City Baths.

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the recent works undertaken by the ACT Government in the lead up to the current season, including the repair of the facade and replacement of tiles. We understand that works are planned for the repair of the filtration system in 2018. We have also been informed that parking adjacent to the pool will be changed to three hours, improving access to the pool. The adjacent parking is currently all day and occupied by workers by 8am.

You asked, *how can the Government deliver current services more efficiently, productively or to better meet the needs of Canberrans?* Funds are allocated each year for the running of the pool and general maintenance. In recent years there have been one-off investments for a new filtration plant for the toddler's pool and backwash retention system upgrades. However, the pool still requires a significant funding injection for work requiring significant outlays. If works are left for too long then the cost of repairs may increase significantly, harming the pool's heritage values and potentially the services and enjoyment it can provide its patrons. We have identified the following key issues as requiring work in the near-term:

- many of the wooden window frames are rotting and need repair or replacement;
- painting of the building and associated infrastructure is overdue. There are currently two shades of green (a heritage and lighter green) used on site, and the main colour also needs repainting – especially noting there are two notes of beige on the south east wall (due to painting to cover graffiti);
- the bike racks should be dipped/repainted as these have not been done for many years. It would also be good to see these, and the water fountain, secured to prevent any theft (as vintage street furniture becomes attractive to collectors);
- there is rising damp in some walls that needs attention;
- rust reinforcement mesh is needed in the concrete concourse and the buildings;
- roof maintenance is needed, with some roof tiles in poor repair; and
- new perimeter fencing is required – the current fencing does not reflect the heritage nature of the pool and is dilapidated. New fencing that is open like the current fencing but more suited to the surroundings and the pool's heritage would greatly improve the pool's attractiveness. A fence similar to the one around the grounds of Telopea Park School, but higher, may be suitable.

If these works go unaddressed then the integrity of the heritage listed buildings and the pool will be at risk. This building is iconic and important to many people from across Canberra.

With the future of Civic Pool uncertain, Manuka Pool will become even more important as one of only three pools in the Kurrajong electorate.

Manuka Pool sits within the broader precinct of Manuka Oval. As such we would like to see better landscaping of the precinct's surrounds, including an alternate solution to the concrete bollards that have been present since last summer and surround the cricket nets. The grassed areas behind the pool and to the east could be landscaped to make them more aesthetically appealing and reflective of our garden city. It may also bring patrons back to these areas to use them for picnics, exercise training and play. They would also be more attractive to those attending games at Manuka Oval and those viewing Manuka Oval (and Canberra) through the televising of games.

Your final question to consider in the budget is, *what can the Government do to make Canberra even more liveable?* Friends of Manuka Pool believe that the provision of open space is vital for any city. Areas that allow people to enjoy green and active space is essential to promote socialisation and physical activity, and become increasingly important as the density of an area increases. FoMP also believe that as a city evolves it is important to recognise, celebrate and embrace its history. Precincts such as Manuka Oval, Gorman House and New Acton are places where our heritage is being embraced and celebrated as part of our changing society. A modernising city that does not protect and celebrate its heritage is a city destined for an era of regret.

Yours sincerely



Clive Hamilton
President
3 November 2017