



MITCHELL TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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PO Box 440, Mitchell ACT 2911

Hon. Andrew Barr, MLA
Chief Minister and Treasurer
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020 Canberra, ACT 2601

2020 – 2021 Budget Consultation

Dear Chief Minister,

The Mitchell Traders Association (MTA) welcomes and thank you for the opportunity to participate in the 2020-2021 Budget Consultation process. The Mitchell precinct is home to an ever-increasing eclectic mix of businesses and organisations that includes: light industrial, adult services, churches, charities, commercial, education, retail, recreation, food, manufacturing, ICT, and UAV technology. Furthermore, the Australian War Memorial Annex, the National Museum of Australia Repository, the National Archives of Australia – Preservation Facility, the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia Vault, and the Australian National Capital Artists Inc. are in Mitchell. In addition to these national institutes, ACTPLA Customer Service Centre, ICON Water, Department of Defence, and Canberra Metro Light Rail Depot are situated in Mitchell.

The number of workers in Mitchell, according to the 2016 Census is 4,945.¹ The success of our business precinct requires continued government investment and promotion. On behalf of the business community in Mitchell, which comprise of over 400 businesses, the MTA submits its proposal to be considered for the forthcoming budget priorities. The MTA submission does not address the specific survey questions posed. Instead, our input relates to Mitchell. What we propose may be relevant and applicable to other trade areas in Canberra as well.

Yours faithfully,

Julian Kusa
Secretary
Mitchell Traders Association
18 October 2019

¹ Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017, *2016 Census of Population and Housing - Working Population Profile*, cat no. 2006.0 [Mitchell (801041045) 7.4 sq Kms] 'Table 1. W01 LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY AGE BY SEX.'

MITCHELL TRADERS ASSOCIATION 2020-2021 BUDGET SUBMISSION

Sandford Street Light Rail Stop & Transportation Network

The announcement of a light rail stop for Mitchell (Sandford Street Stop) in the 2019-2020 Budget is welcomed by the MTA. The Minister for Transport has indicated to the MTA that the construction of the Sandford Street Stop will commence during the 2019-2020 financial year and completed in the 2020-2021 financial year. However, we would appreciate it if the delivery could be achieved much earlier. We hope there are no delays to the operationalisation of the Sandford Street Stop.

Since the light rail commence service in April, there has been a restructuring of the existing bus service in Mitchell. The 'Mitchell Loop' (Route 18) timetable needs better synchronisation with the light rail. The connection between light rail and bus at Wells Station and EPIC is problematic. The light rail arrives just as the bus departs. Commuters have to either wait a further 30 minutes for the bus or walk to Mitchell.

The MTA request an urgent reinstatement of the pedestrian/cycle path along the eastern side of Flemington Road. At present, there is no safe pathway to Wells Station and EPIC light rail stops from Mitchell. The new pathway needs to be prioritised and should extend from Wells Station Drive to EPIC.

The MTA suggests a need for better integration of the transit nodes at Wells Station and the future Sandford Street light rail stop. This requires footpaths, cycleways, bus stops, bicycle rails/cage and Park & Ride working in unison. It should be noted that patronage of public transportation in Mitchell is contingent on accessibility, reliability and transitioning from one form of travel to another with relative ease.

District Improvement & Capital Works Program

The industrial edgy-aesthetics of Mitchell is something that the MTA is proud to maintain and promote. However, to keep the precinct from becoming insalubrious it requires ongoing district improvements in the following areas:

- **Street lights** – We request street lights for Brookes street from Heffernan street to Lysaght street. This area is prone to theft, vandalism and burglaries. Illuminating the street could deter further acts of criminality. Other areas in Mitchell requiring street lights are on Vicars street (from Australia Post to Bunnings Trade) and Buckland street.
- **Footpaths** – We appreciate the recent re-asphalting of the entire street length of Heffernan street. This approach is recommended for the eastern side of Winchcombe court, which is a high foot traffic path. Currently, the path is peppered with uneven patchwork making it difficult to traverse without appearing ebrious to onlookers.
- **Street trees** – The tree replacement program for Mitchell needs to continue by extracting problematic trees. We suggest substituting them with ornamental pears and crepe myrtles. We request consistency with the planting so that the street sightline appears uniform.

- **Street sweeping, mowing lawns, weed spraying** - We request additional street sweeping for Kemble court, Winchcombe court, Baillieu court and Huddart court. These courts have the most build-up of leaves and sediment that clog stormwater assets. A program for mowing and weeding schedule is also needed for Mitchell.
- **Signage** – We request additional traffic signage indicating ‘shops’ at key entry points into Mitchell to advise motorists of businesses in our precinct.
- **Bus Shelters** – We request the relocation of discontinued ACT concrete bus shelters to Mitchell for commuters to use at our bus stops. The concrete bus shelters are required on Sandford and Hoskins streets.

The future development of Kenny and the construction of a public crematorium at the Gungahlin Cemetery requires additional infrastructure consideration for Mitchell. The MTA requests the duplication of Sandford street between Gungahlin Drive and Hoskins street into a dual carriageway to make commuting safer and easier. Currently, the road is vexing because it causes vehicles to bottleneck at the turn into Sandford street from Gungahlin Drive and at the intersection of Hoskins street.

We also request the amalgamation of the parking bays in Winchcombe court to alleviate inadequate and illegal parking in Mitchell.

The MTA recommends an annual budget to be set aside for district improvement and capital works in Mitchell. We suggest a percentage of the revenue from commercial rates collected in Mitchell be reinvested in our precinct. We recommend a similar approach to be taken with Hume, Fyshwick, and Phillip.

Commercial Rates

The MTA is cognisant that rates levied on commercial properties fund a wide range of municipal and essential services for our Canberra community. We are not opposed to rates. However, the reform to the territory’s taxation system has put increasing financial stress on commercial property owners and tenants in Mitchell. Anecdotal evidence in Mitchell indicates some businesses have left our precinct because of the increases in rates and other government charges. Moreover, the vacancy rates in our precinct are increasingly high for property owners. We request the process of determining commercial rates be made more transparent, equitable and reassessed by an independent taskforce.

Future Development & Early Consultation

The MTA requests that any future development that may affect the Mitchell precinct, that the respective government departments provide us with an opportunity to be consulted. The future development of the Flemington road corridor from EPIC to Wells Station Drive provides potential investment opportunities in our area. However, we suggest any development undertaken should be balanced and complement what already exists in Mitchell and Gungahlin Town Centre. The MTA believes that EPIC should remain in Mitchell as a mix entertainment venue. We also think the Mitchell Resource Management Centre and Green Shed needs to remain in the precinct. Relocation of these facilities would be a serious loss to the North Canberra community.