

Thank you for inviting submissions in relation to the ACT Budget.

For 20 years or so, my family have lived in the rural district of Booth within the ACT. The area is farming country, much of it adjacent to Namadgi National Park. Our family live in the Naas Valley, on Top Naas Rd in particular.

Top Naas Rd is a gravel road of about 7 km length from the intersection with Boboyan Rd and serves a vital segment of the rural community.

Over the last 20 years or so, the road has seen a hugely significant increase in the number of cars, trucks and ACT Government machinery travelling to either the farms along the 7km of road, the community services facilities accessed in the Naas Valley or the Community Service providers at Caloola Farm. This includes not only family traffic to the farming areas but ACT Government and Namadgi National park vehicles, trucks and machines and ACT Fire services and facilities of the Naas River trail and Brandy Flat fire and national park trails. . The road has gone from being graded about every 6-9 months or so to being in need of grading after about 3 monthly periods. The condition of the road becomes extremely hazardous if grading is delayed, as it quite often is.

Its condition has been largely ignored, the quickly failing gravel surfaces producing hazardous conditions for users, particularly in period of heavy rainfall. The safety of families and community service (Parks and Fire) services are continually compromised by this troublesome road. Wet weather makes the road virtually impassable to vehicles either not strongly constructed or not 4WD in nature. The historical gravel surface has largely disintegrated and been blown away over the years. All that remains is soil or clay that turns to mush or is blown away with use.

My family, other families and the ACT Government agencies using this road believe it is now a good time to seal the road, primarily as a safety, but also as a convenience, fire access and vehicle preservation service. The ACT rural community would clearly well receive some government recognition of rural needs. It is notable that there have been no rural roads sealed from gravel status since the inception of ACT self government.

There is no expectation of expensive re-engineering of the road but simply a process of 'tar and chips' over the length of the gravel road funded from the ACT Budget. The costs of continually grading and repairing of the drainage to the gravel road, over the years, must surely largely offset a strategic decision to provide a basic level of sealing of this section of ACT roads.

The goodwill such a move would generate in the community would also surely be noticed, talked about, publicised and appreciated. There are perhaps few greater responsibilities on the ACT Government outside of the safety of the ACT community (including rural members) and the vehicular safety of ACT Parks, Namadgi Park and ACT Fire Service members that use this busy but unsealed road.

I am hoping that you can clearly see there is and economic case, as well as equity and safety considerations in place in coming to a decision to seal this road under the ACT Budget funding decisions. I know the rural community, rural road users, cyclists, national Park visitors and others would be greatly heartened to see a commitment to their welfare by the ACT Government by sealing the road.

Many thanks again for providing an opportunity to make a submission about important ACT Budget expenditures.

Regards

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