

Urban Services



Canberra**liberals**

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Urban Services

The Canberra Liberals have an integrated plan to improve the upkeep and look of our city and to restore pride in our beautiful bush capital.

Basic services, such the maintenance of footpaths, roads, parks and public places, help make Canberra an attractive city to live in. Our public facilities such as sports grounds and public libraries are important meeting places around which a sense of community is built. When our city becomes run down, it has a real effect on the image of our city and its liveability.

Labor's Record

Closure of Civic Shopfront


In December 2006 the ACT Government closed the Civic Shopfront, as part of budget cuts. All that remains in Civic is a minimal service in the Civic Library that allows people to get Drivers Licences and other Proof of Age Cards. Canberrans now have to travel to other parts of Canberra if they want to pay car registration bills, purchase prepaid parking vouchers, pay parking fines, pay rates bills, renew their dog registration, pay public housing rents, pay licence fees and permit fees.

The closure of the Civic shopfront was unnecessary, has inconvenienced many Canberrans and is yet another example of the Stanhope Government closing down important services with little regard for the needs of our community.

Civic is the pre-eminent commercial centre in Canberra. The area is home to large Commonwealth Government departments, the legal system and large academic institutions including ANU and CIT. High rise apartments are springing up along the edge of Civic and along the approaches to Civic, while our public transport system converges at a hub in the Civic interchange. It is crazy that workers and residents in the heart of Canberra cannot get access to over-the-counter government services.

Look of the City

Under the Stanhope Government there has been a gradual decline in the appearance of the city, particularly its parks and reserves, shopping centres and urban open spaces. This decline in standards, particularly in relation to graffiti, maintenance and weeding has left our city looking untidy and unkempt. While the Stanhope Government has focussed on its pet interests like roadside sculptures, it has ignored basic issues like roadside weeds that have sprouted along major thoroughfares and suburban streets.



The Stanhope Government has allowed the public spaces at our suburban shopping centres to fall into a state of disrepair. This has led to further decay in many of our centres, with businesses moving to newer locations and centres slowly dying. This neglect must stop.

Closure of Griffith Library

The Griffith Library closure, without community consultation, is an example of the contempt with which the Stanhope Government has treated our community. The closure of the Griffith Library was unwarranted and caused a great deal of community anger. The closure left residents of the Inner-South with a six kilometre journey to their nearest library facilities in Griffith or in Civic. Many of the Griffith Library's regular users are older Canberrans, often without their own transport. The lack of access to services was exacerbated by the storm damage to the Civic Library, which took six months to repair and re-open.

Canberrans are rightfully upset at a loss of services which occurred without any consultation. Stanhope Government Minister John Hargreaves was flippant in his attitude to the community over the library. He said to a rally of Griffith residents on 18 November 2006:

“There was no point in consulting youse ‘cause I knew what youse would say! Is there anyone here who would support the closure of the library? No? That proves my point!”

Waste Management

The Stanhope Government has abandoned the objective of NoWaste by 2010, an initiative of the former Liberal Government. No new waste-reduction activities have been commenced for many years and a recent review of the NoWaste strategy produced a report that has been conveniently buried by the Minister, probably at the Mugga Lane tip!

Interestingly, the 2010 target date has begun to disappear from recent information about the NoWaste strategy. Canberra does not enjoy waste collection services offered to residents by many suburban councils, including green bin collection or heavy item collections. Thanks to the inaction of the Stanhope Government over the past seven years, the objective of NoWaste by 2010 will not be met by the target date of 2010. Major advances can still be achieved towards that target, but it is clear that progress will not happen under the Stanhope Government.

The Canberra Liberals' Priorities

Undoing the Damage – Griffith Library

To undo the damage inflicted by the Stanhope Government, the Canberra Liberals will re-establish a community library in the Inner-South at a cost of \$3.2 million over our first term.

The full range of library and information services previously offered at the Griffith Library will be re-established, ideally, on the same site as the former Griffith Library. We will return the staff, books and other equipment to the re-established library as well as provide \$400,000 for new books, \$1 million on refurbishment and extension of community space and around \$540,000 per year to cover the ongoing operating costs.

| | 2008-09 \$000 | 2009-10 \$000 | 2010-11 \$000 | 2011-12 \$000 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Inner South Library – Fitout and extension to community space | 1,000 | | | |
| Inner South Library – Collections | | 400 | 8 | 8 |
| Inner South Library – Operating costs | 200 | 525 | 540 | 557 |

Undoing the Damage – Civic Shopfront

The Canberra Liberals will re-open a shop-front in Civic, at a cost of \$2.8 million over our first term in government. While we recognise that more and more Canberrans are transacting with the ACT Government online and over the phone, we understand the importance for some residents of speaking to a real person.

Some transactions still require personal attendance at an ACT Shopfront. For instance:

- Prepaid parking vouchers must be bought over the counter if drivers want a valid document on the day of payment – by contrast parking vouchers bought over the phone take five days to arrive.

- Renewal of driver licences or proof of age cards requires a photograph to be taken, so the applicant has to attend in person
- Any transaction requiring production of a valid concession card normally requires personal attendance – this includes concessional payments for car registration, dog rego or CIT fees.

This shop-front will be smaller in size and scale than the previous facility, reflecting the changing ways Canberrans interact with the ACT Government. Some existing staff and funding will be relocated from Dickson and other shopfronts, reflecting a shift of transactions back to Civic. The service will be established at leased premises.

As outlined in our community consultation policy we will make Members of the Legislative Assembly more available to the public by establishing a lunchtime roster of MLAs and their staff at ACT Government shopfronts, so they can assist with constituent problems. For the first time in the Assembly's history there will be de-facto electoral offices at the government shopfronts, so MLAs are accessible at the convenience of the public, in a place where they regularly visit.

| | 2008-09 \$000 | 2009-10 \$000 | 2010-11 \$000 | 2011-12 \$000 |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| City Shopfront – fitout and equipment | 920 | | | |
| Shopfront network – Net increase operating costs | | 600 | 618 | 636 |

Undoing the Damage – improved maintenance

The Canberra Liberals will invest \$1 million extra every year to improve the repair and maintenance of our city. We will improve graffiti removal, rubbish collection, shrub plantings, weeding, sweeping and mowing of our roads, paths, verges, parks and public places. We will restore pride in our city and ensure that visitors and locals are able to appreciate our truly beautiful city.

Extraordinarily the latest Labor budget provided only one year of funding for this extra activity – cynically covering the election year only! A Canberra Liberal Government will spend \$3.1 million over the subsequent three years.

| | 2008-09 \$000 | 2009-10 \$000 | 2010-11 \$000 | 2011-12 \$000 |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Look of the City Maintenance | | 1,000 | 1030 | 1061 |

More Urban Rangers

A Canberra Liberal Government will spend \$927,000 over three years on an additional three urban rangers who will be responsible for a range of city maintenance tasks. They will assist in monitoring and controlling urban open spaces, unleased land and urban parklands. This will allow an improved focus on neglected corners of our city such as the far southern and far northern ends.

| | 2008-09 \$000 | 2009-10 \$000 | 2010-11 \$000 | 2011-12 \$000 |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Urban Rangers – three additional staff | | 300 | 309 | 318 |

Rejuvenating Suburban Shopping Centres

The Canberra Liberals will invest \$9.5 million over the next four years to renew the public spaces at our suburban shopping centres. Most of Canberra's suburban shopping centres are decades old and a large number are well overdue for refurbishment. Our program of investment will involve major upgrades to the most rundown local shopping areas, to create a safer, more attractive environment for shoppers and families. This investment will ensure that our suburban shopping centres get more than just a face-lift, but a genuine new lease on life. Unlike Labor, we have an ongoing program, not a single year pre-election fix.

A key part of the upgrade will include investment in water savings measures including rain and stormwater capture for use in toilets and in garden beds. We will seek partnership agreements with local shops to permit capture of roof water for a range of public watering purposes, in exchange for public investment in surrounding public spaces.

| | 2008-09 \$000 | 2009-10 \$000 | 2010-11 \$000 | 2011-12 \$000 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Shopping Centre Renewal | 500 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 |

Green Bins

As previously announced, a Canberra Liberal Government will introduce a Green Bin service for Canberra's households, to collect and recycle their organic waste. This new service will provide significant progress towards the objective of NoWaste.

Currently more than half the waste that goes from Canberrans' domestic bins into landfill is comprised of organic material that could be recycled into nutrient-rich compost. This valuable material should be reinvested into the environment, not jumbled with other garbage and left in a putrid open-air landfill site. In its untreated form this waste is a major emitter of methane, a greenhouse gas.

A Canberra Liberal Government will deliver green bins to every home, establish a collection service and construct a major green waste recycling plant. The composting plant will convert food waste, garden clippings and other organic wastes into high quality compost products. This is a high technology solution to an age-old problem.

Many municipal councils around Australia run green waste collection systems. The Stanhope Government's policy of sending green waste to landfill is antiquated and environmentally irresponsible.

| | 2008-09 \$000 | 2009-10 \$000 | 2010-11 \$000 | 2011-12 \$000 |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Green Bins collection and processing | | 1,050 | 5,100 | 5,150 |
| Capital - Bins | | 9,000 | | |
| Capital – Composting plant and waste separation | | 38,800 | | |