

## Budget submission for the 2025-26 Budget

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the 2025-26 Budget. We outline three priorities identified by the residents of Braddon which require urgent consideration for funding in the next budget cycle:

1. Upgrade and expansion of public toilet facilities in Haig Park
2. Budget allocation for the Cooyong Street upgrades (Better City Streets initiative)
3. Playground equipment in the Lowanna Street neighbourhood park

Braddon is notable among Canberra's suburbs for its combination of medium and high density housing, mixed-use development, high levels of foot traffic and nightlife economy. Braddon also hosts the weekly Haig Park Markets, and festivals and events in the park throughout the year. Braddon is a home, a place of business, and a beloved leisure destination for many Canberrans and visitors to our city. We therefore ask for the above items to be favourably considered for inclusion in the 2025-26 ACT Budget in this context.

We acknowledge recent ACT Government projects focussed on improving pedestrian infrastructure in Braddon, notably the Lonsdale Street upgrades and the Mort/Elouera Streets intersection upgrade. Due to the high population density, Braddon is a place where any infrastructure investment is serving approximately 7,000 residents<sup>1</sup> and 90,000 visitors per day.<sup>2</sup>

### Who are we?

The Braddon Collective is a community group working collaboratively with residents, businesses, landowners, and the ACT Government to maintain the diverse and vibrant character of Braddon and enhance the environment for those who live, work and play in Braddon.

### Contact

If there are any questions regarding this submission please contact the Braddon Collective at [contact@braddoncollective.com](mailto:contact@braddoncollective.com).

## 1. Upgrade and expansion of public toilet facilities in Haig Park

For residents and visitors to Braddon **there is only one public toilet facility in the neighbourhood, which is located in Haig Park** (near the northern end of Mort Street). Braddon has the second-highest population density in Canberra (2021 Census), yet as at February 2025 there is just one sub-standard public toilet facility. This is grossly inadequate. An investment in an upgraded and expanded public toilet block in Haig Park would meet the growing needs of visitors and residents alike.

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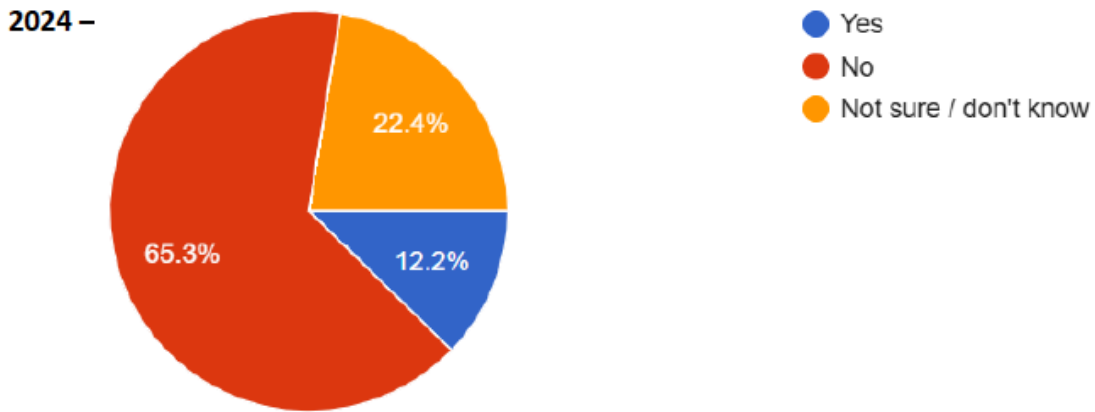
<sup>1</sup> 6,383 residents as at the date of the 2021 Census:  
<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/SAL80027>

<sup>2</sup> Braddon Place Plan (2019), City Renewal Authority.

### 1.1 Concerns of Braddon residents and visitors

The Braddon residents and visitors' survey undertaken by the Braddon Collective in 2024 demonstrates the urgent need for public toilets. Over 65% of respondents stated that there are not enough public toilets in Braddon.

#### Q17. Are there enough public toilets in Braddon?



One comment made by a survey participant captures the sentiment of many of the respondents:

*The public toilets in Haig Park are pretty disgusting inside most of the time - this seems to be a common thing in Australia that the upkeep is laxed and reflects poorly. Would like to see them updated inside (a coat of paint and something done with the floors would do wonders), a spritz that goes off on a timer, or at a minimum cleaned more frequently (or closer to Sunday when they are used more frequently).*

### 1.2 Existing inadequate facilities

The [National Public Toilet Map](#) clearly demonstrates the lack of facilities in Braddon - with the Haig Park toilet being the only facility in the whole suburb. The Haig Park toilet facility has only two stalls and feels old, unclean and unwelcoming. This facility is in desperate need of an upgrade and expansion. Availability of toilets is particularly important for encouraging participation in events and activities in Haig Park - especially for children, pregnant women and older people who need easy and ready access to toilet facilities.

The Haig Park Markets, with approximately 2,000 visitors each week, add a positive dimension to the community and those visiting Braddon on the weekends. It is clear, however, that there are not enough toilet facilities in the area to support market day on Sundays, with long queues often forming for the one toilet facility. The increased visitation to Braddon due to the markets places undue stress on toilet facilities that are provided by nearby traders (e.g. the Ampol fuel station and the Ori building).

In addition to the Sunday markets, the monthly Paws Party and other pop up activations in Haig Park all need to be supported by adequate infrastructure, including toilets.

The lack of public toilets in Braddon is an immediate and ongoing issue that the Braddon Collective has raised in a number of forums over the past 5 years. We submit that the ACT Government urgently considers an **upgrade and expansion of the public toilet facility in Haig Park**.

### ***1.3 Braddon Collective proposal***

We consider the lack of toilets in the park to be a major issue for Braddon and we propose a toilet block with multiple stalls, similar to the one near the Carillion in Kings Park, or facilities in parks in Belconnen.



*Kings Park, near the Carillion*



*John Knight Memorial Park, Belconnen*



*Skate Park, Belconnen*

We would like to draw attention to the Federal grant [Changing Places](#) which provides funding for accessible toilet facilities for people with disabilities. The provision of

accessible toilet facilities in Braddon would enable individuals with high support needs to take part in community life in Braddon, without having to limit their time out.

We further urge the ACT Government to consider the quality of public toilet amenities provided in Canberra. We note that the City of Sydney has invested in toilet facilities that are architecturally designed, attractive and welcoming - we feel that this is the level of public amenity that should be pursued in the nation's capital, and especially so in a park that is listed in the ACT Heritage Register. Some key examples and ideas are presented in this news article: *Dark and grim no more: The architects designing Sydney's Instagrammable public toilets* accessible at <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/dark-and-grim-no-more-the-architects-designing-sydney-s-instagrammable-public-toilets-20230324-p5cv06.html>.

#### **1.4 Wellbeing Indicators**

The BC proposal for an expansion of the public toilet facility in Haig Park captures a number of wellbeing indicators in the ACT Government Wellbeing Framework. Providing public spaces that are fully inclusive and engender a **sense of belonging and inclusion** is crucial to supporting the wellbeing of all residents and visitors to Braddon.

The wellbeing indicators highlight the benefits of a **sense of social connection** through **participation in community events and activities**. Expanding the toilet facilities in our suburb demonstrates a commitment to ensuring accessibility and inclusion for all. Investment in toilet facilities would enable residents and visitors to fully participate in Braddon events such as the weekly Haig Park Markets and the popular Paws Party. When someone needs a service, it should be easy to find and use yet currently the elderly, people with young children and people with disabilities are potentially excluded from community events due to the lack of adequate toilet facilities.

## **2. Budget allocation for the Cooyong Street upgrades (Better City Streets initiative)**

The Braddon Collective has been calling for improved pedestrian infrastructure and safer streets in our suburb for many years, and we have warmly welcomed the Lonsdale Street upgrades which has brought four raised pedestrian crossings to Lonsdale Street. Prior to this project, Braddon had zero pedestrian crossings - a disappointing situation in such a dense and well-visited suburb. We still have a long way to go before Braddon's road designs and infrastructure matches its character as a high foot traffic area.

### **2.1 Concerns of Braddon residents and visitors**

We regularly hear from residents about the lack of road safety and overwhelming car dominance in Braddon. The 2024 survey of Braddon residents and visitors showed that:

- **86% of respondents said that they travel to and around Braddon by walking**
- the most common problem identified in the survey was with **pedestrian paths being cracked, uneven or incomplete** (48%)

- 47% of respondents said Braddon could be safer and more welcoming for pedestrians
- 24% said that Braddon was not safe for cycling and micro-mobility, with 41% saying it could be better for cyclists and those using micro-mobility devices.
- 31% said that lack of infrastructure in Braddon meant that it is not safe for those with mobility issues; 32% said it could be better.

All survey results are available here:

[https://braddoncollective.com/2024/11/24/braddon-survey-2024/.](https://braddoncollective.com/2024/11/24/braddon-survey-2024/)

## ***2.2 Current experience for residents and visitors***

Currently the pedestrian experience for residents and visitors navigating **Cooyong Street** is of an unpleasant car-dominated environment with excessive vehicle noise, a harsh and ugly landscape, exposed hot environment in summer, impatient drivers who intimidate pedestrians as they cross the road on the green pedestrian light, and jaywalking as the lights take so long to favour pedestrians.

In particular, the poor quality/uneven footpath surfaces along the northern side of Cooyong Street poses a high level of risk to pedestrians. Cyclists are also currently exposed to high levels of risk as there is currently no safe route for cyclists travelling along Cooyong Street.





*Google street view: uneven footpaths along Cooyong Street, Braddon*

Cooyong Street currently presents a visually unattractive and unwelcoming urban environment to residents and visitors that is not fitting for our national capital city. The unattractive vista presented when looking from Braddon to Civic in this area is not fitting for the CBD.

**With this in mind, the BC strongly supports the proposed upgrade to Cooyong Street (through the Better City Streets initiative) with tree plantings and landscaping, wider footpaths, separated cycleways and an increase in the number of signalised pedestrian crossings.**

### ***2.3 Braddon Collective proposal***

The BC fully supports the designs that have been put forward for consultation for the upgrade of Cooyong Street from Northbourne Avenue to Donaldson Street. We call on the ACT Government to **fully fund the Cooyong Street upgrade as a matter of priority**.

The ultimate goal is a better, safer and sustainable Braddon for everyone – we welcome all investment, goals and action that improve connectivity between Braddon and Civic and enhance the urban environment. We note that urban places that are walkable and welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists have been shown to aid the economic health of a city.<sup>3</sup> Further, the landscaping and tree planting proposed as part of the Cooyong Street upgrades will contribute to ACT Government tree canopy targets, and will mitigate the urban heat island effect.

### ***2.4 Wellbeing Indicators***

The BC support for the Cooyong Street upgrades is focussed on improved **Access and Connectivity** for residents and visitors to Braddon. Upgrading the footpaths, making it

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<sup>3</sup> See:

<https://theconversation.com/parking-isnt-as-important-for-restaurants-as-the-owners-think-it-is-74750>;  
[https://www.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/2613833/Better-City-Streets-Report-AdamsUrban-V2-Web.pdf](https://www.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/2613833/Better-City-Streets-Report-AdamsUrban-V2-Web.pdf);  
[https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/653254/Economic-benefits-of-20-minute-neighbourhoods.pdf](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/653254/Economic-benefits-of-20-minute-neighbourhoods.pdf) - s 4.3 Retail trade.

safer for pedestrians to cross the road, and providing a safe cycling infrastructure will enable visitors and residents to move around Braddon and between Braddon and the city.

We also note the economic benefits of improved access and connectivity in this part of Canberra. The strength of the ACT economy and community wellbeing are intertwined, and it is clear from the literature that providing an urban infrastructure that encourages more pedestrians and cyclists has a positive impact on the **economic performance** in the immediate area.

The wellbeing indicators that highlight the environmental and climate benefits of cooling through increased planting in urban areas is also addressed in the proposed Cooyong Street upgrades design. The landscaping and tree planting proposed will reduce temperatures and mitigate urban heat. The increased tree canopy cover will ensure that this area of the city will create a **climate resilient environment and community**.

### **3. Playground equipment in the Lowanna Street neighbourhood park**

In December 2021 members of the Braddon Collective initiated a petition that was presented to the ACT Legislative Assembly calling for the **upgrade of 'Braddon Park', a neighbourhood pocket park on Lowanna Street** in Braddon. At the time, Minister Chris Steel responded to the petition to say that no funding for such works was provided in the 2022-23 Budget. We therefore urge the ACT Government to make funding available for a park upgrade in the 2025-26 Budget.

#### ***3.1 Community concerns and current condition of the park***

During the ACT COVID lockdowns, local residents noticed that the Lowanna Street park was poorly appointed in terms of infrastructure for community use. In particular, the park includes only two pieces of play equipment. Usage of the park increased during the lockdown period which highlighted the paucity of facilities.



*Playground in Lowanna Street Park, Braddon*

In late 2021 a community survey focused on the Lowanna Street park was run by the founders of an online group, Friends of Braddon Parks. 100% of respondents agreed the park is in poor condition. The top five priorities identified by the community in the survey were:

1. Upgrade playground to be more engaging and inclusive, including considerations for disabled people (61%)
2. Install better lighting (55%)
3. Improve safety and accessibility of footpaths (55%)
4. Provide more seating options, such as picnic tables (52%)
5. Increase biodiversity, such as micro-forest (49%)

We note that there were some upgrades to the footpaths in the park in response to community concerns raised in 2023.

The 2024 Braddon Collective survey also demonstrates community concerns about the lack of playground facilities in Braddon. One survey respondent stated:

*Would love to see some children's playground facilities near Haig Park - we often see children playing on the dog equipment or the logs particularly on Sundays with the markets which indicates it would be utilised/there is a need. It also may bring in a larger demographic to visit the markets and surrounding amenities. (I'm sensing wooden theme playground to keep with the Haig Park aesthetic.)*

A very high number of survey participants identified that a playground (such as slides and swings) is needed in Braddon to encourage children to play (73.5% of respondents).

### ***3.2 Braddon Collective proposal***

At minimum we urge the ACT Government to **fund an upgrade of the very basic and poorly maintained playground equipment** in the Lowanna Street park. There is no playground in the suburb of Braddon and no playground in adjacent suburbs that do not require crossing a major road (e.g. crossing Limestone Avenue to Corroboree Park). The residents of Braddon with young children urgently require a playground within a walkable distance.

The high-density growth model of apartment living that has been seen in Braddon over recent years needs to be supported by adequate community facilities. Why would families be willing to live in the inner-city area without playground facilities? An investment in an upgraded playground in Lowanna Street would meet the growing needs of Braddon and support a high-density growth model.

### ***3.3 Wellbeing Indicators***

The BC proposal for the upgrade of the Lowanna Street park touches on several wellbeing indicators, notably **Health** and **Social connection**. High-quality playgrounds are a place for parents and caregivers to meet, and for children to interact with their peers. As noted in the Wellbeing Framework, ensuring children get the best start in life is a key determinant to ensuring their wellbeing into the future.

### **Questions?**

If there are any questions regarding this submission please contact the Braddon Collective at [contact@braddoncollective.com](mailto:contact@braddoncollective.com).