

**ACT PARLIAMENT DISCUSSES**  
**STATE OF FOOTPATHS, STREET TREES AND LIGHTING IN**  
**INNER SOUTH**

**ACT Legislative Assembly, 14 May 2014**

**MR DOSZPOT** (Molonglo) (5.10): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) that footpaths in Canberra's older suburbs, including Yarralumla, Deakin, Griffith, Forrest and Campbell are in a serious state of neglect, with many cracks and uneven surfaces;
- (b) that these same suburbs and others have similar issues with overgrown and overhanging street trees and poor lighting; and
- (c) this makes access for many residents, especially older Canberrans, difficult and dangerous and is preventing many from using walking as an exercise to keep fit and agile; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) publish current maintenance schedules up until the end of this calendar year by the next sitting period in June 2014; Legislative Assembly for the ACT 14 May 2014
- (b) publish updates to maintenance schedules quarterly; and
- (c) urgently prioritise older suburbs for improvements.

Last year Canberra celebrated its 100 years since establishment, so it is inevitable that we have a number of suburbs that have infrastructure that dates back nearly that long. I am privileged to be an MLA for Molonglo, which includes some of Canberra's earliest and most historic suburbs. Their history of development makes for fascinating reading and puts paid to the claim that Canberra is a new city with no history or soul. Indeed, you only need to roam through some of Molonglo's oldest suburbs to see the historic links that Canberra has to Australia's early history.

Yarralumla was officially gazetted in 1928. Europeans first settled the area in 1828, and it was named Yarralumla in 1834, from the Indigenous Ngunnawal people's term for the area. The Griffith area was previously known at Blandfordia, named after the Christmas bell. Settlement of the Blandfordia 5 precinct south-west of

Manuka began in 1926 and 1927. In 1928, southern Blandfordia was renamed Griffith and northern Blandfordia became Forrest. Ainslie is another early suburb, having had the first housing constructed around Corroboree park between 1925 and 1927 to accommodate tradesmen for the construction of the city. The suburb was gazetted in 1928, as was Deakin. Campbell is a more recent addition, having been gazetted in 1956, but it, too, has strong links with Canberra's early history, being originally Duntroon station. I could go through and list a dozen other suburbs, not just in Molonglo, that have similar histories and similar vintages.

It is inevitable that as our city ages and matures we will start to see maintenance and infrastructure issues. We have seen it in some of our older schools, many of which were constructed using asbestos materials, requiring upgrade or replacement. As a city, we make proud claims to being Australia's bush capital, and the early decision to give free trees and shrubs to every home builder has certainly reaped rewards. The wide streets and numerous open spaces also allowed for mass tree plantings, and we see the benefit of those early decisions in our four seasons – the beautiful autumn colours, the blossom in spring, the shady parks in summer, the tall eucalypts of several varieties. All these add to the appeal this city has to residents and visitors alike.

However, there are downsides. Deciduous trees shed masses of leaves; eucalypts shed bark and drop limbs; and our large streetscape trees have massive root systems which, over time, inevitably lift up footpaths and produce limbs that overhang pathways.

As a local member in a local legislature, I think it is important to concentrate on the things that we can affect and the things that matter to our constituents. Footpaths are probably the most consistently complained about issue, followed closely by streetlights that either do not work or are ineffective, especially in suburbs like Forrest, where the lights are older and the trees are bigger. At certain times of the year, shedding trees and loose branches are a serious trip hazard, especially for our older residents. 14 May 2014 Legislative Assembly for the ACT Canberra residents are not unreasonable people; they understand that as Canberra grows, demand for services will also grow. They understand that they may have to wait a little longer than they once did. But when I talk with constituents, and indeed residents from all parts of Canberra, I can see that the problems are getting bigger, the wait is getting longer, and sometimes nothing happens at all. Let me quote from a few constituents. One says:

The footpaths in Forrest, Griffith and Yarralumla are terrible. They rarely have a proper curb lip and often end abruptly halfway across a block, requiring you to cross

the grass and road multiple times. This doesn't encourage people to walk or run and makes it virtually impossible if you have either a wheelchair or a pram.

And this from another:

The whole of MacDonnell Street is very dangerous. As I go to work and return in the dark I generally have to walk in the road, ducking to the edge to avoid cars. There are no sidewalks at all between ... the Iceland Embassy [and] the Chinese Embassy. There is limited lighting in Arkana Street; no safe sidewalks in many areas.

Given that these are suburbs that were gazetted in the mid-1920s, it is not unreasonable for residents to expect kerbing and guttering 86 years later.

But it is not just a lack of kerbing and guttering that is of concern. The number of paths that are cracked, uneven and positively dangerous to even the most sure-footed pedestrian are an OHS liability of enormous proportions. We have cracked footpaths along main roads that lead to shopping centres, paths that are used every day by residents of all ages – by people in wheelchairs, people using mobility scooters and walkers, and young mothers with prams. They all have to battle the cracks and uneven surfaces on a daily basis.

But they are possibly the lucky ones, because there are many more roads that do not have any footpaths at all. A major road like Stonehaven Crescent at Deakin does not have a footpath on one side; yet it has had houses for probably 50 or more years, and people use it as a main thoroughfare to go to the Deakin shops. It is not an isolated case.

When we go to the issue of lighting, the story is the same. The lights are old; of period but ineffective design; unreliable; and often covered and smothered by overhanging trees. And because they are old, they go out of service more often. As one resident informed me last week:

The street light in Mueller Street has been out of service at least 3 times in the past 2 years. It is very dark at night. I last reported it on 28 March.

We have many enjoyable parks, reserves and grassed areas in Canberra, but, again, too often they are overgrown, untidy and littered with rubbish. A Yarralumla resident told me this only yesterday:

I live opposite a reserve and near the primary school. It is not uncommon for me to collect rubbish, bottles and broken glass where it is appropriate. However I have noticed that glass is everywhere on the roads from the south side to the north side.

I was moved to write to the minister only the other day because, on two recent shopping centre visits, I was asked about street sweepers and when they would be

operating in their suburb. On asking more residents, I discovered many had never heard or seen a street sweeper in their area. Others did not even know Canberra had such services.

With a growing population and new suburbs coming on board, I think we need to review how maintenance issues are being managed and what resources are being directed to them. Last week in the Assembly, Mr Rattenbury, in responding to Mr Hanson's motion about the need for government to get its priorities right, criticised my motion. Let me quote what he said:

Mr Doszpot then goes on to call on the government to urgently prioritise the older suburbs for improvements. So which is it? Is it the forgotten suburbs that Mr Hanson cares about or the inner suburbs that Mr Doszpot cares about? Which bit of parochialism are we meant to respond to here?

Mr Rattenbury, we would like to believe you when you say you care for all of Canberra, but I know from experience that the rhetoric does not always match the reality. I have to question why a suburb like Crace, which is all of five minutes old, should require repairs to footpaths and overhanging trees and require the level of maintenance that the older suburbs do. And rather than suggest it is a matter of parochialism, surely it is more a case of the government not doing the job it is elected to do. That job is to serve the needs of its residents, to concentrate on things we can influence and improve.

The very point of Mr Hanson's excellent motion last week was that this government has its priorities wrong. How well Mr Rattenbury's response demonstrates that. Is it parochial to want to have better services for your constituents because such things as affordable rates, clean streets, lights that work, footpaths that are safe to walk on and shopping centres free from graffiti are the things that matter to Canberra families? You just have to be out there at the shopping centres to know that.

Of less concern to even fewer people are such things as light rail, wind farms, piggeries and renewable energy targets, because they will do little more than drive up the cost of living and do little to improve the daily lives of Canberrans. Mr Rattenbury and his government impose rates in the thousands of dollars on the homes of ordinary Canberrans, simply because, 50 years ago, they built their homes in what are now regarded as prestige suburbs. I wonder whether that is the fate of some of our newer outer suburbs as they become the new inner Canberra in 50 years time – unaffordable rates, broken footpaths, filthy streets and unmown open space.

Some may believe that these issues are far too trifling for us as MLAs to be taking up Assembly time discussing. But let me remind this Assembly that this is what concerns Canberrans, and it goes to what makes them enjoy living in Canberra. That is why we were elected to this place.

Mr Rattenbury last week went to great lengths to assure the Assembly that he was here for all Canberrans. He said:

You name the suburb. It does not matter from where you send in a complaint to the government; the government will go out and fix it—not just in the parochial areas and the ones that Liberal Party members have decided to focus on today.

Mr Rattenbury, what happened at Mirinjani at Weston, with older citizens in a middle-aged suburb? Let me quickly bring the Assembly up to date with this particular footpath issue. When I visited Mirinjani village in September 2013, residents pointed out the state of the most used community footpath from Namatjira Drive to Cooleman Court—a route frequented by Mirinjani retirement village residents, some of whom are able to walk without assistance, others who use mobility scooters or walkers.

We wrote to the minister in early September and outlined two problems. One was the state of the community footpath I mentioned; the other was the gradient, angle and incline of another footpath from the walkway up to the bridge, which was dangerous for residents who ride mobility scooters. The minister replied in November, advising that the work to remove trip hazards along the community pathway had been completed, and that he had instructed Roads ACT to undertake investigations about the gradient problem. He wrote again in December to give an update on constructing an alternative path that would be disability compliant and further advised that it would be in the 2014-15 footpath program. I know the residents are happy with that.

However, his claim that the community footpath had been repaired is somewhat wide of the mark. Residents asked me to visit again to see what work had been done, because they could not see any—and, frankly, neither could I. There had certainly been no work done on the most obvious and main pathway, the one first complained of. I wrote again to the minister in early March to point this out and I also included photographs. It was six weeks later that the minister admitted they had got it wrong.

Frankly, how anyone could have failed to notice the blatantly obvious cracks and the dangerously uneven state of disrepair of this path is beyond belief. However, he admitted his department's mistake and promised that the work in question would be finished by the end of April 2014. As of today's date, it remains in the same dangerous state of disrepair as it was when I first brought it to the minister's attention in September last year.

So much for the minister's claims that all footpaths are treated equally. And so much for his suggestion that we Liberals should try and decide which should come first—the older suburbs or the forgotten suburbs. I suggest that Weston can lay claim to both categories, just as older suburbs like Deakin, Forrest, Yarralumla and Campbell

are fast becoming the forgotten suburbs. We appreciate that not every problem in every street, in every suburb, can be repaired immediately. We also recognise that maintenance must fit within a budgetary time frame.

I know the minister would prefer that Canberrans not contact their local MLAs and instead just utilise the “fix my street” facility on the ACT government website. But not all Canberrans, and especially not older Canberrans, are comfortable doing that. As Minister for Ageing, he should appreciate that. But even when residents use that facility, such as for street light repair, and even when they write to their local MLA, as Mirinjani residents did, they still do not get things fixed. These are the same Canberrans who are paying increasingly high rates.

Our motion today calls on the government to become more transparent in their management of such issues. We have asked that the government:

- (a) publish current maintenance schedules up until the end of this calendar year by the next sitting period in June 2014;
- (b) publish updates to maintenance schedules quarterly; and
- (c) urgently prioritise older suburbs for improvements.

This is not an unreasonable request, Mr Rattenbury. It does not have budgetary implications but it does urge transparency. There is no reason why both the Greens minister and Labor ministers and MLAs should not support it. It goes to good governance and transparency in service provision – nothing more, nothing less. That is what we are asking for.

Mr Rattenbury, I urge you to consider the motion that we put before you, which is, as I said, not an unreasonable request. We are simply asking for more transparency so that people can see and know when to expect the things that they are told would be fixed, so that they can see that the government has planned to do just that. Governance and transparency in service provision are something we are asking for, as I mentioned – nothing more, nothing less than that, Mr Rattenbury. I commend this motion to the Assembly.

**MR RATTEBURY** (Molonglo – Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Ageing) (5.24):

I would like to thank Mr Doszpot for bringing forward this motion today because I think it is a welcome opportunity to speak about the upkeep of our paths. I should say, of course, that I am happy to organise a briefing for Mr Doszpot or any other MLAs, at any time so that he can discuss issues like this with TAMS officials and get the complete detail, including all of the complexities about it.

At the beginning of this year I invited all MLAs to attend a session with Roads ACT here in the Assembly. The session was notionally about how Roads ACT deals with the prioritisation of residential traffic upgrades but also how it prioritises safety upgrades as well as other infrastructure like footpaths and shared paths. I thank the MLAs who attended. Ms Lawder was there from the Liberal Party and several MLAs attended from the Labor Party. Staff members from other Liberal offices attended, including from Mr Doszpot's office, but, unfortunately, Mr Doszpot was evidently not available. Can I suggest that this would have been the perfect forum for Mr Doszpot to get all the information he needs about footpath repair and prioritisation.

It is clear, unfortunately, from Mr Doszpot's motion and from what he said in the chamber today, that he does not have a complete appreciation of how the footpath prioritisation and maintenance program works. To give the Assembly some idea of the extent of the network, there are some 4.1 million square metres of community paths in Canberra, comprising three million square metres of footpaths and 1.1 million square metres of bicycle paths or, in terms of total length of paths, 2,715 kilometres, with 2,295 kilometres of footpaths and 420 kilometres of bicycle paths. They play a very important part in the lives of the residents of our city now and into the future.

Pedestrian and bicycle movements are an important part of creating sustainable transport in our city. Thousands of Canberrans, young and old, use the path network every day for convenience, recreation and exercise, so the task of maintaining paths so they are safe and available is very important. It is also valuable that Mr Doszpot and other members of the Assembly understand some of the challenges that face the government when taking responsibility and a long-term approach to this maintenance requirement.

The age of paths varies from suburb to suburb. However, with Canberra celebrating its 100th birthday last year, it is clear that some of them are quite old. The areas which are old are being replaced over time. Roads ACT has had in place for more than 10 years an ongoing regime of systematic inspections of paths. This produces an annual program of repair and renewal works which seeks to get the best overall benefit from the resources available.

Mr Doszpot refers to particular suburbs in his motion, so let me offer the following detail on the areas and ages of paths in these suburbs: Yarralumla has 78,000 square metres, originally built in 1942; Deakin has 53,400 square metres, originally built in 1946; Griffith has 58,700 square metres, originally built in 1943; Forrest has 32,800 square metres, originally built in 1938; and Campbell has 28,400 square metres, originally built in 1944.

What Mr Doszpot may not know is that there is an extensive inspection program for paths based on the greatest risk areas having the highest priority. I think he would

agree that this is a sensible approach to managing a community asset rather than, for example, deciding where upgrades should occur based on particular Assembly motions that may come up from time to time. This is designed to be a more strategic approach.

In its program, TAMS gives more regular attention to high use areas, for example around shopping centres, schools and aged persons institutions. For example, in Civic, paths are inspected on an annual basis. In high need suburbs the commercial centres and community facilities, such as hospitals and schools, are inspected between every two and three years. In these suburbs the residential areas are inspected at four-yearly intervals. As I said earlier, we are talking about over four million square metres of community paths across Canberra. It is a very large area to inspect and that, of course, impedes the ability of TAMS to inspect each area with great frequency.

What we have done, however, is make a significant investment in a call system for all residents to report infrastructure issues. This includes reporting faults in paths using the internet-based fix my street or directly referring matters by telephone or email to Canberra Connect. This augments the regular inspection regime. I think that most Canberrans, certainly plenty of people that I talk to, recognise TAMS does a good job in responding to reported issues. Going to the earlier remarks about accessibility of these services, I am cognisant of these things as the Minister for Ageing. I am quite mindful of it.

By providing a telephone service through Canberra Connect, it certainly moves away from anybody needing to have access to the internet. We have got the full range. There are those who are incredibly tech savvy – and not even incredibly tech savvy; anyone who is vaguely tech savvy can download a fix my street app. That offers the added capability that if somebody is out there with their phone, as plenty of people are these days, they can take a photograph with the GPS coordinates attached to it and this gives TAMS the absolute information of the location of something. So rather than having to go and maybe have a bit of a search based on someone saying, “On such and such a street,” it locks in the coordinates. That is one end of the advance. But for those who are less comfortable with technology a telephone service through Canberra Connect exists as well. I think the full spectrum of opportunities is there for people to report issues.

As I say, the feedback I get from a lot of people is how quickly the response often comes. I often write back to people saying that TAMS will usually go out and inspect something within a couple of days of receiving a report. It may then take some time to get on the program. I will come back to that a little bit later. There is the odd occasion when things fall through the cracks. Mistakes get made and things get dropped.

The extensive example Mr Doszpot gave about Mirinjani is perhaps an example that fits into the exception rather than the rule where, if it was put in, it seems somebody got it wrong, but then TAMS and I have been willing to say, "Fine; the effort is continuing to get it right." I think that a measure of somebody is their willingness to say, "Oops, we did get it wrong. We'll have another go. We'll get it sorted." I have no qualms with that.

Certainly, members of the public make good use of the facilities the government offers to report issues with the paths they use. Well over 2,000 requests have been received in this fashion in just this financial year. Think about the scale of that work. All of these reports are assessed and the resulting repair work is added to the program. Maintenance of paths is based on immediately repairing hazards using a variety of methods such as patching gaps and holes and grinding of edges.

In addition, sections of paths are replaced over time when they have failed. The programs for replacing paths are based on need and inspections. They are not necessarily based on age. I do not agree with the suggestion that priority should be based on age. A proper maintenance program should be based on factors such as risk and usage. It would not be right to simply base maintenance decisions on age. TAMS assessment does tend to result in the older suburbs in the inner south and north attracting more attention as their needs are greater.

I note Mr Doszpot's call in his motion for the government to publish maintenance schedules. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that TAMS already publishes details of the planned program of work on its website. So the transparency is there. Currently, there are details available of the work that will be undertaken over the next two months at 561 sites in 27 suburbs, including 4,434 square metres of renewed path and a range of associated improvements. Additional information about footpaths and cycle path requests will continue to be placed on the website during 2014-15.

Of course, contractual arrangements, budget cycles and the continual inflow of needs that must be prioritised limit how far into the future this sort of detailed information can be reliably forecast. As new packages of works are prepared and contract periods are locked in, the information available on the website is updated. If there is a request for a different way to provide the information—and I suspect members may have views—noting some of the limitations I have just explained, I am happy to have a discussion with members and consider alternative approaches.

For the interest of the Assembly, I note that the government expects to spend \$3.7 million on footpath maintenance alone in 2013-14. In the last full year, 2012-13, about 38,000 square metres of path was replaced. In addition, grinding machines treated about 20,000 metres of cracks and raised edges and 800 other repairs were made by patching.

Part of the joy of walking and cycling on our large network of paths is the leafy surrounds. So part of the challenge of maintaining the paths is the management of the path-side vegetation. A feature of some of our older suburbs is the presence of many well-established and much-loved hedges and boundary plantings. Where plant growth from leases encroaches onto public paths, the city rangers and Roads ACT work closely with leaseholders to find the right balance in keeping paths clear for use, as well as for maintenance, and preserving the character and sustainability of plantings as far as possible. A similar balance is required where tree growth encroaches or roots are a problem in breaking up paths. Roads ACT takes advice from urban treescape officers on each of these cases to find ways to carefully trim roots and branches and/or redesign the path to allow renewal without endangering the tree's health.

Lighting, of course, also plays a key role in making paths an attractive, safe and practical option for every day and evening use. In addition to the illumination provided by street lighting, there are about 45,000 public street lights that serve paths. The first lights in Canberra were installed early in the 20th century. However, light standards have obviously developed and changed since then. This means that for many of our older suburbs they are not lit to the standards that would apply today. Street lights in the inner suburbs were generally installed to provide light primarily to paths.

When lights are upgraded in inner suburbs there is an improved result for both paths and roads as they are to a higher modern standard than those previously installed. However, there are still areas that would benefit from upgrade. There is a capital upgrade program that targets infill lighting of paths and streets. These programs are developed from requests from the public and are based on a warrant system. During 2013-14, for example, \$250,000 has been committed to lighting infill.

There has also been an ongoing light replacement program where inefficient lights have been replaced in the inner suburbs of Canberra with highly efficient energy saving lights. Of the 3,000 lights upgraded this financial year, over 20 per cent were within the inner Canberra suburbs. Of course, this has the added advantage of reducing our carbon footprint.

It is worth noting that with the redevelopment of inner suburbs, where new developments are built, such as multi-storey apartments, the developer is required to upgrade the lighting around their development to current Australian standards. Of course, members will also have noticed when they go past these developments that the footpath gets upgraded. There is also a significant capital works program for the building of footpaths in new locations in existing suburbs to encourage walking and to improve neighbourhood amenity.

All of the identified missing links and requested additions to the network are assessed using a warrant system that takes into account factors such as safety, connectivity to community facilities, including schools, group and local shopping centres and public transport, as well as traffic desire lines. During 2013-14 over \$1 million has been spent to build around 3,400 metres of the highest ranked priorities.

As I have said before, the path maintenance work is based on need, not age or particular suburbs, and for reasons of equity and efficiency this must continue. The path needs of all suburbs are being addressed in a systematic and planned manner for the benefit of residents and as part of our plan to increase walking and cycling as an integral part of our transport system.

Given the points I have just made, I will be moving an amendment which gives both a realistic assessment of the state of footpaths in Canberra and a fair and objective approach to footpath repairs and maintenance. I simply conclude my remarks before moving the amendment by saying that I actually think this is very important. I also get representations through Canberra Connect, who receive many reports that are directly dealt with, and, of course, through a number of MLAs who write to me. I reassure members that I read each and every one of those letters. I do my best to make sure the answer coming back from TAMS is forthright. We cannot meet everybody's requests all of the time. I am usually pretty forthright with members about that. I will say, "This is actually down the ranking list because of where it is." We get all sorts of requests. There has to be some sort of ranking. I am more than happy to receive further requests from members. I cannot always guarantee an immediate fix.

As I was observing before, sometimes a request comes in and it will be put into a works package that takes six or eight months. What I actually find when I write back to people and say, "Look, it will be done; it will take six months because that's the most efficient way to get the contract to work," is that members of the public are very understanding. They appreciate that it has been noted and they accept that there is an efficiency in leaving it that long to get the work done just so that a whole suburb can be done at one time for efficiency's sake. It is an ongoing piece of work and one that I will continue to make sure TAMS delivers on as effectively as it can. I now move the amendment circulated in my name:

Omit all words after "That this Assembly", substitute:

"notes:

(1) footpaths in all of Canberra's suburbs require ongoing maintenance and upgrading over time to ensure Canberrans, particularly older residents, are able to use them for transport, recreation and exercise;

(2) Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS) uses a detailed system of investigation, reporting and prioritisation to decide on upgrades and maintenance schedules, analysing factors such as usage rates and safety; and

(3) TAMS publishes planned works programs for community path maintenance on its website.”.

**MR CORBELL** (Molonglo – Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations and Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development) (5.40):

Labor members will be supporting Mr Rattenbury’s amendment this afternoon, because I think he has outlined that, as a government, we have a very comprehensive program and a

reasoned and rational framework for the maintenance of this important community infrastructure. I was particularly struck by Mr Rattenbury’s mention of the fact that Territory and Municipal Services do actually disclose their maintenance program. I have been able to call that up.

There is an online reference here for upgrades to north Canberra footpaths, including the suburbs of Ainslie, for example, one of the older suburbs that Mr Doszpot mentioned, Downer and Watson, also older suburbs, as well as newer suburbs like Weetangera, Holt, Charnwood, Flynn, Spence, Melba, Evatt, Mackellar, Ngunnawal, Gungahlin and Macgregor, and includes things such as removing existing 75 to 100-millimetre footpaths and replacing them with 100-millimetre concrete paths in places such as 3 Angas Street in Ainslie, outside Goodwin Village. It includes repairs at the corner of Sherbrooke and McColl streets in Ainslie. It includes upgrades outside 11 Atherton Street in Downer. So it highlights very clearly the maintenance program in place by the government to respond to the concerns raised by the community.

That is entirely appropriate, as Mr Rattenbury says. The maintenance of assets should be based not solely on their age but on their condition and worthiness and the safety risks and hazards that they may present if the asset has deteriorated. I commend Territory and Municipal Services also for putting online their policy in relation to footpath maintenance. There members of the public can see clearly the rationale for maintenance of footpaths, in what circumstances action will be taken, in what time frames and the types of actions that will be taken. All that is publicly available for members of the public to see. Legislative Assembly for the ACT 14 May 2014

Of course, there are other schedules, as Mr Rattenbury mentioned, also available online. There are grass mowing schedules available online. There is the daily road

resurfacing schedule made available to members of the community to review. And there is an annual street sweeping program in place. Again, that is available online.

I think in relation particularly to the street sweeping, it is worth highlighting that street sweeping occurs usually on an annual basis, certainly in the suburban context. And it may be the case that people who have not seen a street sweeper simply were not home or not aware that on the particular day the street sweeping program occurred, because it only occurs, on average, once a year. And that is, of course, a reasonable service standard. But if people do not notice it, of course they are going to say they have not seen a street sweeper. But it does not mean that it does not occur and the program is online so that members of this place and, indeed, the broader community can review it.

So the government does take these issues seriously. It is a challenging task, as Mr Rattenbury alludes. It is a challenging task to maintain the large amount of built infrastructure in our city. Because we have an extensive pedestrian path network, footpath network, cycle and shared path network and because we are a garden city, we face, on average, many more tasks of maintenance than perhaps an equivalent urban area does.

These are the issues that we continue to work to address. But the programs and the policies are well and truly in place to address them and to respond to complaints in a reasoned and consistent manner when they are raised by members of the community. So I commend the amendment to the Assembly and indicate that I and other Labor members will support it.

**MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (5.44):** I must say that I am disappointed in Mr Rattenbury's amendment because, as we have just been discussing as well, the fact is the motion that I have put before the Assembly here is basically covered in a lot of the ambitious statements that Mr Rattenbury makes, or commitments that he is giving. Yet he is not willing to accept the motion which calls on the government to:

publish current maintenance schedules up until the end of this calendar year by the next sitting period in June 2014; If he saying that they are already doing it, what is so difficult about that? The motion calls on the government to publish updates to maintenance schedules quarterly. If he has got all that information, that should not be too difficult. It also calls on the government to have urgent prioritisations for older suburbs for improvements. These are not difficult issues to look at. From what Mr Rattenbury is saying, his department is looking into aspects of that.

What we are trying to do is give the people, the older citizens especially, some comfort in the fact that we understand that the everyday issues they confront are very serious. We have got streets in the older suburbs, Deakin and Yarralumla, where if you walk out at night and if have not got a very strong torch, even a totally

able individual will find it difficult negotiating some of those dark street corners and streets to get to the shops. I have had neighbours who have complained to everyone that will listen to them, and yet still nothing has been done about the inadequacy of the lighting.

Mr Rattenbury has mentioned that, yes, some of the infrastructure and some of these lights are fairly old and obviously are not of the same quality as they are elsewhere. So there is an admission that, yes, we have got this problem. But what are we doing about it? What are we doing about providing some upgrade to the infrastructure, to the people in the suburbs, where now they are paying the highest rates in Canberra, and growing each year? Yet we are asking them to accept inferior infrastructure within their own communities.

It is, I think, incumbent on Mr Rattenbury, as the Minister for Ageing as well as for TAMS, to have a look at and have a good listen to what has been said here today on behalf of the constituents that we represent. And they are his constituents as well. We have called on the government to do certain things which are certainly not outside of the scope of his ability to do. That would give some relief to the people who are concerned about the issues that they confront on a daily basis.

I cannot accept his amendment, because the amendment basically simply wipes out a lot of the points that we have noted, and that is:

that footpaths in Canberra's older suburbs, including Yarralumla, Deakin, Griffith, Forrest and Campbell are in a serious state of neglect, with many cracks and uneven surfaces;

But according to his amendment, footpaths in all of Canberra's suburbs require ongoing maintenance and upgrading over time to ensure Canberrans, particularly older residents, are able to use them for transport. He is rewriting history, in a way, as to what is actually happening at the moment and what the intentions of the government are. We are looking at these same suburbs that have issues with overgrown and overhanging street trees that obstruct the poor lighting. What are you doing about that?

We are asking the government, with this motion, to carry out certain acts, acts that are absolutely available to the government. I call on the government once again to: publish current maintenance schedules up until the end of this calendar year by the next sitting period in June 2014; I am asking the government to publish the updates to maintenance and schedules quarterly and to urgently prioritise older suburbs for improvements. So I cannot accept the amendment Mr Rattenbury has put here. I call once again for the government to have a look at what we are asking for. It is nothing more, nothing less than the community demands, and that is good governance and transparency in the provision of services.

**Question put:**

That the amendment be agreed to. Legislative Assembly for the ACT 14 May 2014

The Assembly voted –

Ayes 9

Noes 8

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

**Motion, as amended, agreed to.**