

16 October 2008

## **Municipal Services slashed by inexperienced team**

Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, John Hargreaves today highlighted the programs which the Liberals will cut if elected this Saturday.

“The major cuts would include the shopping centre upgrade program. Forward designs for Deakin and Scullin will not proceed under the Canberra Liberals, and other shop upgrades, in Waramanga, Red Hill, Lyons and Farrer will be delayed for a further two years,” said Mr Hargreaves.

“No playground or parks upgrades would happen as the Libs will cut \$4.5 million out of that budget, along with the \$4.5 million over 3 years for urban open space and landscaping.

“Mr Smyth and Mr Pratt have made much in the past about how tatty the town looks but they are planning to cut those programs aimed at improving the amenity of the city and suburbs. If they carry this through, Mr Smyth and Mr Pratt would forfeit their right to comment on the appearance of the city ever again.

“The Liberals cost cutting exercise to pay for their unfunded promises also includes privatising contracts, some of which benefit Koomarri staff. The ACT Government for many years has contracted directly with Koomarri for the supply of staff to carry out horticultural maintenance and cleaning duties.

“This contract is let on a single select basis by the ACT Government. The Liberals want to review and renew this arrangement so that Koomarri will have to tender against other commercial operators. At stake is a contract worth \$237, 000 per annum.

“These cost cuttings by the Liberals have to be read in the context of Mr Smyth’s Cabinet submission of 1998 in which he recommended that involuntary redundancies should be used to produce the savings he was then enforcing in his department. Those savings included cutting \$12.7 million out of ACTION and the sale and leaseback of ACTION buses. Mr Smyth also wanted to sell public housing stock to raise revenue.

“Mr Smyth has a track record in slashing the public service and cutting essential services. He will do it all again if the Liberals are elected this Saturday.” Mr Hargreaves concluded.

Statement Ends

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**Direct quotes from Brendan Smyth Cabinet Submission dated 6 May 1998 (pp9-11)**

**33. Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

**Urban Services**

- c) agree to the **full application** of the RRR award (ie: **involuntary redundancies**)

**ACTION**

- p) agree to establish ACTION as a **Territory Owned Corporation** from 1 January 1999. [ACTEW was set up as a TOC prior sale of 50%]

**ACT Housing**

- t) agree to continue the capital budget as set out in ... the business case which is dependent on the CSHA component of the loan surplus be appropriated to the housing budget and **increased property sales to meet the funding shortfall.**