



# Meegan Fitzharris MLA

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Member for Yerrabi

Minister for Health and Wellbeing  
Minister for Transport and City Services  
Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research

Mr Tom Duncan  
Clerk  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
London Circuit  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Duncan

*Tom,*

Thank you for your letter of 17 August 2017 regarding the petition No 20-17 lodged by Ms Elizabeth Kikkert MLA and received in the Assembly on 17 August 2017, regarding upgrades to playgrounds in Higgins.

The ACT Government invested \$2.7 million in 2016-17 in recognition of the important role play spaces have in fostering healthy communities. The investment included upgrades to four prioritised playgrounds located in Florey, Gowrie, Gungahlin and Evatt and installation of three natural play spaces in Barton, Tuggeranong and O'Connor.

The ACT Government manages over 500 playgrounds, including four in Higgins. Playgrounds are prioritised for upgrade based on recommendations from annual safety audits along with current demographic, spatial and social information. This process ensures that safety standards are maintained and public investments are suitably targeted.

The most recent playground audit found that the equipment in the playgrounds on Hudson Street, Rich Street, O'Sullivan Street and Westhoven Street in Higgins remain fit for purpose. There are no current plans to undertake complete upgrades on the playgrounds in Higgins. I have attached a map showing the locations of these playgrounds.

The request in the petition for climbing frames, slides and a shade sail has been noted. A new piece of equipment, such as a spinner, will be installed in the playground at Hudson Street by January 2018. The community will be consulted on the type of equipment, being mindful that it will be required to fit within the soft fall area.

I understand the Rich Street playground was upgraded in 2010-11 with new swings, a spinner and a climbing structure. The pine bark soft fall at the Hudson Street and Westhoven Street Playgrounds was topped up in July and September 2017.

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In regard to general maintenance, the playgrounds in Higgins are inspected and cleaned fortnightly. This involves a visual inspection of the playground and a check for vandalism and obvious faults to the equipment. Litter, broken glass and sharps are collected and bark is raked in heavy use areas under swings.

Shade sails are installed in high use district park play spaces and some large centrally located play spaces across Canberra where the frequent visitation rates and longer visits show that they will benefit the greatest number of children.

Public bins are provided in shopping centres, town and district parks and other areas where there are high levels of visitation. Bins are not provided in local neighbourhood parks, instead visitors to neighbourhood parks and other public open spaces are encouraged to take their rubbish with them and dispose of it appropriately.

The aged and decommissioned drinking fountain was removed from the playground located in Hudson Street Higgins in February 2017 and it would require major works to install new underground piping and a water meter. Drinking fountains are generally installed in higher use areas.

Thank you for raising this matter with me. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

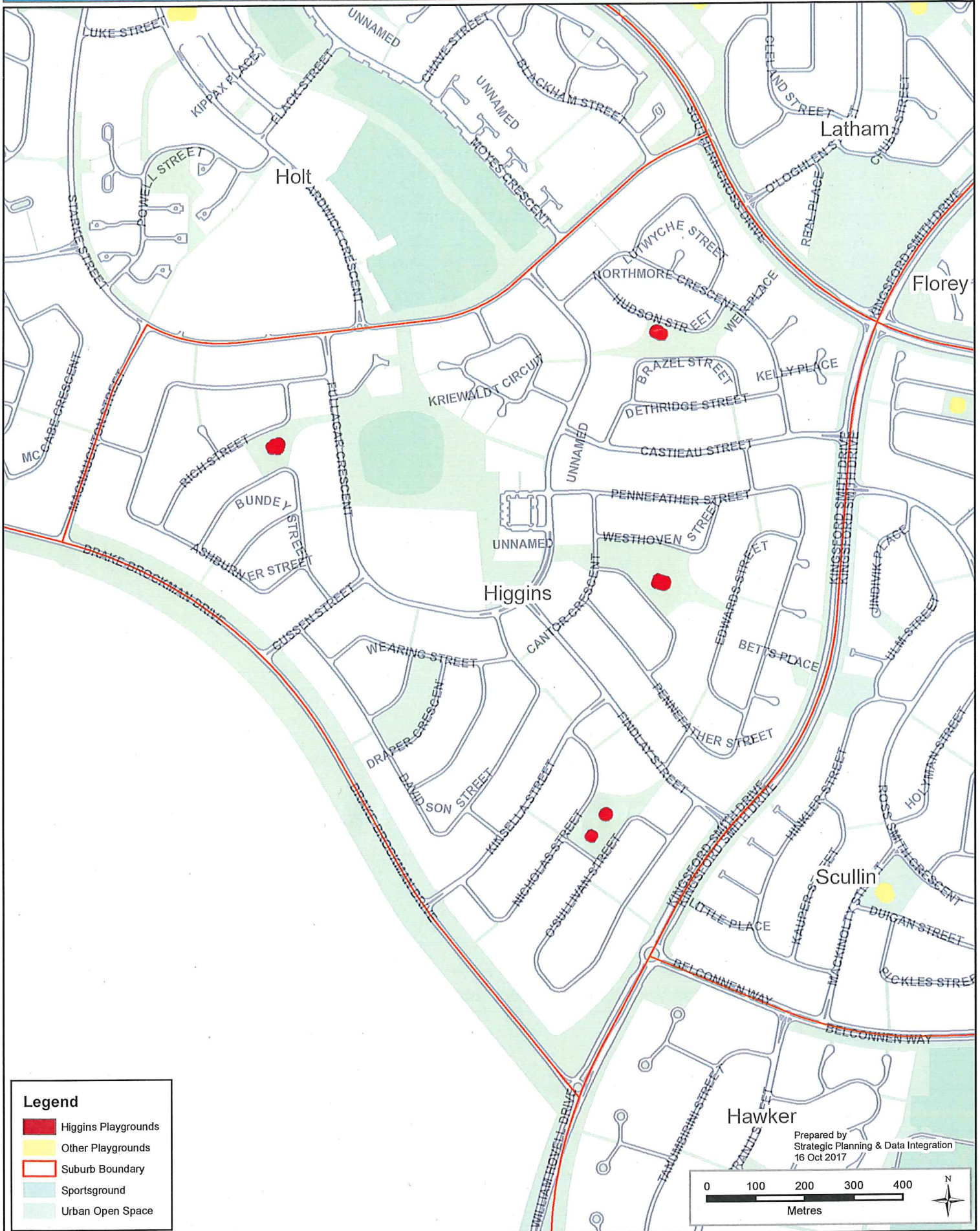


Meegan Fitzharris MLA  
Minister for Transport and City Services

24/10/17



# Government Playgrounds in Higgins



**Legend**

- Higgins Playgrounds
- Other Playgrounds
- Suburb Boundary
- Sportsground
- Urban Open Space

Prepared by  
Strategic Planning & Data Integration  
16 Oct 2017

0 100 200 300 400  
Metres

