

REPORT SNAPSHOT

Road maintenance

Why did we do this audit?

There are 3,134 km of sealed public roads in the ACT, many of which were laid down more than 50 years ago. Maintaining the quality and function of ACT roads is crucial to promote public safety and to minimise the amount of road rehabilitation required in the longer term. The audit considered whether the ACT public road network is being effectively maintained, with a specific focus on the maintenance of the road surface.



What did we find?

- A new resurfacing strategy (the *Strategic Road Maintenance and Renewal Program*) was publicly announced in February 2023. The new resurfacing strategy sought to address the issue that the 'ACT's road surfaces and pavement structure [was] deteriorating at a faster rate than is offset by current maintenance and rehabilitation levels'.
- Central to the resurfacing strategy is the Pavement Condition Index. The Pavement Condition Index is sensitive to Pavement Management System setting adjustments, including changes to weightings for the five condition parameters that comprise the score. It is possible to create a change in the Pavement Condition Index score by changing system settings rather than changes in the data that are reflective of physical changes to the road surface condition.
- Because the Pavement Condition Index is a function of both changes in the condition of the road network and changes to system settings it is imperative that Roads ACT be publicly transparent and explicit with respect to: levels of service and experience that road users can expect; and any changes to system settings (including changes to weightings for the five condition parameters that comprise the score) that may affect the calculation of the Pavement Condition Index.



What are the key issues?

- The Territory's road maintenance activities are currently publicly reported through Accountability Indicators relating to the volume of road resurfacing. In the first two years of the new resurfacing strategy there has been an overall increase in resurfacing. However, this has been achieved through bituminous reseal as opposed to asphalt. (Asphalt resurfacing is a more expensive treatment, but has greater longevity).
- From 2021-22, the quality and condition of the ACT road network was reported with reference to the *Pavement Condition Index score of Territorial roads* Strategic Indicator. The Pavement Condition Index score was removed as a Strategic Indicator as part of the 2026-27 ACT Budget process. This means that there is no Strategic Indicator or Accountability Indicator relevant to the condition and quality of roads in the ACT. This significantly weakens public accountability.



What did we recommend?

- The audit made twelve recommendations relating to the road resurfacing strategy, performance reporting, improved administrative arrangements for business units in Roads ACT and documenting policies and procedures in relation to road resurfacing activities.

