

20 JUN 2017

The Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

20 June 2017

Elizabeth Gaskell

	A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE
SUBMISSION NUMBER	65
DATE AUTH'D FOR PUBLICATION	27/6/17

RE: Submission to the Inquiry into Billboards by the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal.

Submission by: Elizabeth Gaskell

As a proud ACT resident, having chosen to move here from the Gold Coast in South-East Queensland, I am fundamentally opposed to any form of billboard advertising in the ACT.

While living in South-East Queensland, I was required to drive up to 4 hours a day to and from work, and measured my journeys not in beautiful landscapes or natural panoramas but by billboards, for example "when I get to the McDonald's billboard, I know I'm half way home". I remember intrigue and excitement when a billboard would be changed between one day and the next, wondering what new sight I would get to stare at in gridlock traffic, and hoping it would be an entertaining one.

Having made the decision to move to Canberra, to improve my quality of life and enjoy the experience of living in a city sensibly planned with minimal advertising and corporate exposure, it would be heartbreaking to see billboards erected beside our major roads. I use Parkes Way and the Tuggeranong Parkway every day for travel to and from work, and I now measure my journey by Mount Stromlo, the Arboretum, Black Mountain and Lake Burley Griffin. These are the points that I fixate on and that bring me joy every morning on my travels. All this is to say that Canberra has a unique outlook as a city, with so much natural beauty and planning that takes advantage of that natural scenery at every turn, even besides our major roadways, that it would be a disgrace and a disappointment to the fabric of our city to allow huge, distracting billboards beside our roadways which would only serve to block out the natural beauty of our 'Bush Capital'.

The other thing I love about Canberra, in comparison to the larger cities I have called home over my life, is that we have a unique and thriving small business sector. I remember being surprised, the first time I visited, that Canberra malls were full of small independent stores, and that Canberra had business chains that never reached outside of the local area. This is practically unheard of in modern Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Large corporate advertising, billboards and gross signage has rendered small businesses obsolete. Few in Southeast Queensland choose a local café or restaurant over a well known chain, and never are these small businesses mentioned with the same pride as we mention Sammy's Kitchen, Two Before Ten, Bentspoke or any of the other wonderful options Canberra has to offer. Huge

billboards, sold to the highest bidder without regard for the needs of the local community, would create an advertising environment that our locally owned community businesses would be unable to compete with, and losing them would cause the loss of the heart and soul of the city.

Please do not allow the erection of billboards in the ACT. It may seem like a small venture, to raise a bit of extra cash perhaps, but it will fundamentally change the way that Canberra sees itself, and the way that Canberra is seen by visitors, and once changed, we will not be able to return to that friendly "Bush Capital" feeling ever again.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth Gaskell