



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

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Submission Cover Sheet

Nature in Our City

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The Committee Secretary,

Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services

ACT Legislative Assembly

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Nature in the City Submission — Keeping “Bush” in the Bush Capital

I was born in Canberra more than 70 years ago and have always used and loved its proximity to the bush, from watching birds and catching tadpoles and skinks as an adolescent to bushwalking and working for several park care groups, and contributing to Canberra Nature Mapr at this end of my life.

We have the choice now not to subject Canberra citizens of the future to the frustrations of dwellers in other Australian cities, long queues, stuck in car jams, poor quality air, long travel to work, hours spent in the shadow and swirling winds of tall buildings, traffic and air conditioner noise, concrete and bitumen and little green space. Wall to wall houses in the suburbs such as mine are filling what were once ¼ acre blocks with trees shrubs and gardens, the chainsaw all too frequently in use.

Canberra has excellent green spaces, our national park, Canberra Nature Park, street trees and low density housing. We are never far from nature though this is under threat with densification, high-rise development and rapidly growing population. Whenever we have guests from overseas we take them down to Canberra Nature Park in Aranda to get up close to wallabies and Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Gang Gang Cockatoos and the dozens of different birds and insects that can be found there. Or we drive out to Tidbinbilla or Namadgi National Park for walks in the wonderful Brindabella mountains.

Town planners in Government should not lose sight of the natural values of Canberra and their impact on the general health of its citizens, physical and mental, nor its attraction for tourists both interstate and international. We shouldn't allow people to keep destructive feral pets such as cats that kill or maim thousands of native animals, skinks, birds, butterflies and other insects. All suburbs should be declared cat containment only, all cats should be registered and desexed.

More attention should be paid to providing corridors for native animals to move through the landscape and not be confined to Black Mountain or any of the other nature reserves. This will enhance their lives and the enjoyment of humans. Shooting kangaroos in reserves is a failure of management, more thought should be given to enabling them to move around in the environment as they did before Europeans arrived.

One of the wonderful things about Canberra is the view of the mountains, changing dramatically through the seasons and the direction you happen to be facing, reflected in the lakes, protruding from clouds or dusted with snow. The view of the mountains is important; lets not exchange it for the view of a neighbouring high-rise building. Those mountains provide the city with clean drinking water, with water for our gardens and lawns. The two major rivers systems should be designated reserves and be open for all people, they provide essential migratory routes for dozens of bird species, animals and insects. Some places along the river systems are special places for Canberrans; the Cotter, Causuarina Sands, Point Hut etc and to these should be added the Ginninderra Falls, closed to the public now for far too long.

Join me in loving Canberra as it is, not as it is in danger of becoming, just another ugly city.

Kevin McCue

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