



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

Jo Clay MLA (Chair), Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy), Mark Parton MLA

Submission No 2 - Dr Nick Thomson

Inquiry into Giralang Shops

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15 March 2021

The Chairperson
Standing Committee on Planning, Transport, and City Services
ACT Legislative Assembly

I have been a resident of Giralang since 1979. From 1981 until 1985 I was a teacher at Giralang Primary School, and for over 5 years I was the Area Coordinator for Safety House in the Kaleen/Giralang area. I have lived without a set of shops in my locality for over 16 years. This lack of facilities has continued despite a considerable increase in the number of residents in this suburb during this timeframe, as well as several substantial increases in the rates that we are required to pay.

It seems to me that Government has done nothing or very little to date to hold the Lessee to account for being in breach of its obligations under the Crown Lease for the Block that comprises the Giralang shops. I understand that the Lessee, Nikias Diamond, has indicated that they are unwilling to proceed with the development because they have been unable to secure 'an anchor tenant' i.e. a supermarket

While I understand that the Lessee would like to have an 'anchor tenant', it is the Government's job to ensure adherence to the terms of the Crown Lease and that the interests of the community are protected. Moreover, the rate payers of Giralang are entitled to the facilities available to others in our city, and the government is responsible for providing those facilities.

As I understand it, the site of the shops has been abandoned for many years, partly as a result of a lengthy legal battle that went all the way to the High Court before Nikias Diamond lodged the current Development Application in April 2018. I understand further that under the Crown Lease construction was due to be completed on this site by 12 March 2021. I do not believe any construction has taken place on this site during the 3-year term of the lease.

I am also greatly concerned that within a short distance from the Giralang Primary School there is a derelict and dangerous building site that, in my opinion, is an accident waiting to happen. Do we have to wait for a serious accident to occur on this site before the ACT Government is prepared to take meaningful action to resolve this ongoing impasse?

It seems that the main reason the developer is unable to attract an anchor tenant is the unrealistically small size of the space allocated for a supermarket ie 1000 m² . I would therefore like to suggest that the conditions of the current lease be varied to allow a supermarket of at least 1500 m² in size, a café, and some residential units.

If the 1500 m² allocation for a supermarket is not possible under the terms of the Crown Lease, then it is incumbent upon the ACT Government to find a new developer who would be willing to develop the Giralang Shops with a community arts/cultural space instead of a supermarket.

Yours,

Dr Nick Thomson DBA