



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

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Submission No 30 -

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Inquiry into Giralang

Shops

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Submission to inquiry into Giralang Shops

We have been residents of Giralang for over 20 years - we remember both the amenity, and community interaction that resulted from tenanted shops in Giralang, the foot-traffic the shops generated, and the much fewer short car-trips we made for last minute groceries and supplies. In addition there has been a significant reduction in the amount of parking near the school and ovals. For a Government committed to reduced Carbon emissions, safer streets, active travel and healthy weight - as we believe the ACT Government to be - the loss of the Giralang shops should be of considerable interest and concern.

We also remember that the the lessee, Nikias Diamond, has been in breach of their lease conditions for around 15 years - failing to run shops (terminating viable leases with tenants), failing to provide a safe right-of way through the then derelict shops site, failing to keep the site clean, sightly, and safe, and now failing to proceed with the approved development.

Given these constant and repeated breaches, we call upon the ACT Government to, within a very short time frame, hold the Lessee to account for being in breach of its obligations under the Crown Lease for the Block that comprises the Giralang shops. If the lease conditions are not met after this time, we call upon the Government to revoke the lease and find a lessee who IS interested in creating a vibrant local centre in Giralang. Why are such breaches tolerated? I cannot imagine a landlord tolerating lease breaches by a domestic tenant... why the special treatment for Nikias Diamond in this case?

In the meantime, we call on the ACT Government to take immediate action to make the site safe by removing the current dangerous structures and the obstructive fencing, and then opening the area for overflow parking.

We are greatly concerned that, without this action, the derelict building site is extremely dangerous. It is immediately adjacent to the school, and to the 7-11 - both places where young people meet and gather. It is a tragic accident waiting to happen.

There is a lot of pedestrian activity. The fencing means that pedestrians are funnelled around the site, bringing them into the same corridor as vehicles. This is exacerbated by the lack of suitable parking during busy periods when cars also line and obstruct the pedestrian access. The current fencing also makes the sweeping bend around the shops site on Canopus Cres particularly dangerous, impacting driver and pedestrian visibility.

We have coordinated five school fetes while parents at Giralang Primary School. When parking was still accessible on the shops site, it made for a much safer event - without the shops parking, streets were clogged with cars. As the school grows, there is insufficient parking for parents attending whole-school events and assemblies (staff occupy almost all of the school car park). During these events surrounding areas become congested and unsafe. During school drop-off and pick up cars routinely line Canopus Crescent, something that never occurred when the considerable amount of parking was available at the shop site.

As part of the last DA for the site Nikias Diamond promised the school community an upgrade to the current school car park, including an dedicated drop-off/pick-up zone and bicycle storage. This shows there is an acknowledged issue with existing car parking and pedestrian access for the school and the surrounding area. This promised upgrade has not occurred.

We believe Nikias Diamond have had ample opportunities to develop the site, operate a viable business and meet their obligations as lessees. Nikias Diamond have consistently failed to do so.

We call upon the the ACT Government to take strong action - to revoke the Crown Lease held by Nikias Diamond as we believe the Government is not just entitled to do, but obliged to do so, to meet the needs of the Giralang community.

Aidan Heerdegen and Janelle Kennard

