

6 December 2009

The Committee Secretary

Ms Nicola Derigo

Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services

Via email: committees@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Chair

SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO RZ3 AND RZ4 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES - INNER NORTH CANBERRA

1. As a general introduction, my family lived in the area for over 30 years and has experienced inevitable changes, mostly for better. However, there are self-interest elements in the community, and in the local government with intent to stifle, prevent and deny changes that must be made over time so that the city and the community can move with the rest of the world and become self-sustainable in the use of non-renewable resource, the land. Such elements speak for themselves and, whilst they believe in-them-selves they are better off, the reality is evident from their actions that translate to OUR future generations.
2. Also, I wish to point out, whilst my self-interest is evident in this submission, I have NO interest in development in the local area whatsoever. However, my comments and this submission deny negative influence catching-up with the reality of the fact that non-renewable resource, namely the land, does not grow.
3. Let me please begin with an example of how negative, jealous and shortsighted influence by some in the community, combined with jealous, uneducated and shortsighted members of the government can cause irreversible damage ...:

The ACT Government owned a property on over 1000m² of prime development land, in a prime area of Braddon, having about 67m², 1br, dilapidated, run-down and eye-sore of a house; it was built in early 1930's with any material they could gather those days.

The Government failed to maintain the property for many years. It was leased out for an unimaginable low rental, in the first place to **an elderly couple that deserved every help they could get from the government.**

However, these elderly couples spend most of their free time in the garden and fixing and mending the place as best they could.

*Document edited.
Paragraphs not directly relevant to the inquiry removed.*

However, soon after, restrictions were placed so that ONLY 28% OF THE BLOCK COULD BE UTILISED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ACCOMMODATION.

4. Application was made for the two blocks to be combined to develop 6 apartments. Because of restrictions imposed, the development was opposed, and eventually, only 28% of one block was developed.

However, the 28% development, it is known to all, does not pay for itself. Further, it prevents an investor developing what is needed in the area and what is acceptable to the community that is in the market for living accommodation in the area.

In short, because of the jealousy of some members of the community and the shortsighted nature of the local government decision makers, the 28% rule acts to encourage sprawl of suburbs, an unsustainable growth with all costs for infrastructure and accompanying misuse on non-renewable resource, the land.

Our suburbs incorporate the best productive lands, cutting valuable farming land out of the market and spreading our cities to unsustainable proportions. All this, because some members of the community, and jealous local ministers demand *"...no-multi unit development be allowed...because ... [I do not want them] around me..."* (emphasis added), not for any other reason but for their wrongly-skewed self-interest.

WHWRE TO WITH RZ3 AND RZ4 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES - INNER NORTH CANBERRA

1. **The merits of maintaining (a) the policies applying to the RZ4 areas...**
As mentioned above, I do not have any re-development interests in the area. However, sprawling suburbs, increasing costs of new infrastructure, misuse of non-renewable resource (valuable, productive and self-sustainable farm and forest land) **will CERTAINLY cost our future generations very dearly.**

However, we will not be here to see the consequence of our actions...

The 28% restriction on block use is an example of how self-interest, jealousy and short-sightedness of our uneducated and impractical political leaders can do an unimaginable and irreversible harm to future generations. An example of this shortsightedness is the argument that "Many developers have a ... reputation for trying to squeeze the maximum yield, and thus profit from any development...". Such arguments ignore the fact that development needs to pay-for-itself; OTHERWISE, WE WILL NOT HAVE THE DEVELOPMENT.

In addition, given the current East-West tensions empathized by the on-going financial crises of the Western economic world, soon there will be no cheap finance from the east for misuse by the West by supporting an unsustainable sprawling suburbs; we will have to pay for these luxuries!

THERE IS NO SENSIBLE MERITS in maintain **arbitrarily set criteria** either of the .65 plot ratio until 23.5 hectares of the 25.9 hectares of blocks have been developed... THIS POLICY, BEING ARBITRARY, is unsustainable and serves to please self-interest groups and uneducated, inexperienced and jealous members of the government so they can brag about it and therefore **leave a VERY COSTLY LEGACY TO FUTURE GENERATIONS TO CLEAN-UP AND TO PAY FOR IT.**

The question is: would it not be less costly, and environmentally and economically more sustainable to put policies in place so that the area can be developed in a way that future generations (say 150 years in the future) can use the properties instead of having to bulldoze them down in say 20 years time to make room for higher density accommodation?

2. WHAT DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA SHOULD APPLY TO THESE AREAS:

- a. pragmatically, development criteria that should apply (given sensible and un-influenced policies) should BEGIN WITH the need for the minimum living area for today's and future generation's living standard, of say 140m² of living accommodation space, plus say about 40m² of storage/car space/bicycle parking etc;
- b. assume that the development land area is of a 1000m², and costing in today's market say \$850,000; to build 140m² of living accommodation space and 40m² of other space, costs about \$1,800.00/ m² =building cost \$324,000.

If we argue AGAINST density, THE TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT IS \$1,174,000 = TO ACCOMMODATE FAMILY.

WHAT ARE THE MONETARY COSTS: say interest rate is at 8% (plus costs for risky development, and this would constitute a very risky project); INTEREST ONLY PAYMENTS FOR THIS ACCOMMODATION WOULD BE \$93,920/PA.

This scenario does not account of cost of investment risk, project markup (profit), and cost to the future generations of building TOTALLY unsustainable accommodation that will have to be removed within the next 20 years so to make space for more sustainable and modern accommodation.

c. **ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: WHAT DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA SHOULD APPLY TO THESE AREAS:**

Given the 140m² of living accommodation space and 40m² of other space, we need to concentrate on development that should last FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT 150 YEARS.

The PLOT RATIO AND THE NUMBER OF STOREYS should be such that the project accounts for all costs and results in AFFORDABLE living space that can pay for itself.

In our scenario, and given today's costs of comparable accommodation, cost of such apartment should be brought onto the market for about \$400,000 (land and building package, with all amenities and sustainability).

To achieve the above, one should be allowed to utilize at least 80 % of the block and allow about 2.25 storey of building height; in practical terms, the number of storey should be MINIMUM 3 storey. The monetary value of the ratio of 0.75 of the third story should be utilized to install all modern self-sufficiency supporting items such as the wind and solar run.

To emphasize, the above scenario is based on pragmatism and NOT ON SOME EMPTY RETHORIC and jealousy. If we allow pragmatism to prevail, we have a better chance living more sustainable lives and causing much less pollution, whilst leaving better assets to our future generations to enjoy and improve.

3. THE MERIT OF MAINTAINING THE MORATORIUM ON REDEVELOPMENT IN TURNER SECTION 47 AND PART 63

For the reasons already discussed, THERE ARE NO COMPELLING MARITS IN MAINTAINING THIESE ARBITRARY POLICIES, BASED ON SELF-INTEREST OF

JELLOUSY AND WITHOUT ANY ECONOMIC OR OTHER SUSTAINABLE CONSIDERATIONS.

The moratorium in question has been put in place by impractical, jealous, uneducated and self-defeating interests in the community and supported by similarly tarnished government bureaucrats, guarding their annual income increases and superannuation savings, at the expense of those that do not enjoy these privileges.

The time has come when we, as part of this planet, cannot afford the luxury of the 28% building plot ratio. Now, we have to start demolishing the 28% designated buildings that had no time to pay for themselves, and build sustainable and long-term accommodation. However, our suggestions of at least 30 years earlier were laughed at by jealous bureaucrats, only because they would have lost their benefits had it not been for ill-propelled self-interest supporters.

4. WHETHER SIMILAR REDEVELOPMENT POLICIES SHOULD BE EXTENDED...

Pragmatically assessing where we are in terms of the sprawl of suburbs, destruction of arable land, irreplaceable nature of the land resource (the land does NOT GROW), destruction of nature by new land re-zoning and land development, costs of road and other infrastructure development, costs to the environment, ageing of the population and other similar aspects, we may place such restrictions at the expense of our future generations, all to satisfy our own shortsightedness.

5. The Committee's view on higher density development along major transport corridors...

And why should there be consideration OF ONLY COMMITTEE'S VIEW? Is the Committee in capable to think for the future generations, uninfluenced by the shortsightedness and jealousy of some community members as represented by impractical, uneducated and jealous ministers?

6. The inquiry should consider factors such as the demand for higher density... the infrastructure capacity...affordability...reduce ...travel ...impact of the policies on the amenity enjoyed by residents...

What is evident from SOME PARTS OF THIS TERM OF REFERENCE is the influence of **TODAY and no foresight for TOMORROW.**

It is GIVEN that we MUST embrace 'higher density', even if we do not agree with the fact that "...some situations where many Europeans live in 3-5 stories buildings..."; "...Such people..." have buildings SEVERAL HUNDREDS (IF NOT

THOUSANDS) YEAR OLD, and still useful in today's age. We do not need to denigrate others to try and stop our community building sustainable, well planned and economically efficient living accommodation.

The infrastructure capacity should have been PLANNED WHEN ORIGINAL DEVELOPMENTS WERE DONE so that new developments can be sustained; for example, when suburb was designed, sewerage and infrastructure should have been designed for the next 500 years, and not from today-to-tomorrow. Alternatively, start doing those now so we do not keep repeating the mistakes of the past.

Reduce ...travel ...impact should also have been planned for; politicians and their cronies spend billions and we get the road that is good-enough for the next 5 years, with traffic jams every 100 meters... Infrastructure such as the road and sewerage should be there for the next 1000 years; once paid, there is no need to pay for it again...

Affordability: affordability considerations should incorporate the impact of sprawling suburbs; loss of the farm land; the cost of pollution resulting from development of another suburb; future transport provisions (there will be no chap oil for too-long); older population and the need to grow money on trees to pay the Land Tax, Rates, Sewerage costs, cost of the politicians governing 280,000 of population; retirement costs and therefore loss to the government of tax revenues, and many more variables.

We cannot keep borrowing on the international markets to subsidize our sprawling suburbs; China will not lend us the money!

As stated above, **what is the affordability measure:** is it the \$cost or some social impact measure, or combination of MANY factors? What measure will our future generations have to put in place to pay for our mistakes: BUILDING ACCOMMODATION FOR ONE FAMILY OF FOUR PEOPLE ON THE BLOCK OF LAND OF 1000m², and *no development because I do not like it next to me...*

Impact of the policies on the amenity enjoyed by residents...

The measure of these criteria is there to keep repeating the past mistakes: *no development because I do not like it next to me...*

However, we continue planning new suburbs as if the land grows; we allow interest groups and impractical politicians to stifle anything that looks developing for long-term-sustainability and economic viability, only because of the toll poppy mentality.

ANY OTHER RELEVANT MATTER: recently developed apartments had to have “FREE SPACE”; yet, water shortage made the space useless for any practical purposes.

Perhaps, **COMMUNITY FREE SPACE** would be better idea, whereby gardens, playgrounds etc are developed and maintained for all to use, paid by those that benefit from its use, namely populous that are having and are expected to be have children in the future. This space does not necessarily has to be immediately along the accommodation space – it can be anywhere where such space can best be developed, maintained and utilized.

CONCLUSION

We, as guardians of this nature should use as least of it as we can in order to preserve as much as possible of it for future generations (as long as I am comfortable...). Doing so, we should develop NOW for FUTURE GENERATIONS (invest in properly developed infrastructure so that future generations do not have to repeat the expenditure for as long as possible: say at least 1000 years).

We should remove all ARBITRARILY IMPLEMENTED, ego based restrictions on plot ratio and on the number of storeys; instead, we should start assessment from the COST BASE of each accommodation, incorporating proper cost base to the developer for all cost variables. This would encourage LONG-TERM-BASED developments (developments that would not need to be re-developed for say at least 500 years).

Our planning should take account of the facts such as that, the land does not grow; finance is not free; cost of any development must be paid; we cannot keep developing new suburbs and cutting off the land from food production, and all that goes with such an activity; we cannot keep borrowing funds, yet in say 20 years we pay again to remove those building and start all over again...

All planning aspects should be rid of short-termites, jealousy displayed by such interest groups and perpetrated by such politicians. It should focus on sustainability, economic and all encompassing costs of development (including un-renewable nature of the land), even if we do not like “...some situations where many Europeans live in 3-5 stories buildings...”.

However, as a comment, all attitudes change when humans are forced to implement those changes; it is just too costly for future generations when we now make decisions based on jealousy which will cost them dearly.

Barbara Barlin