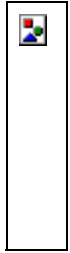




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10 May 2005

Dr Hanna Jaireth
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Dr Jaireth

Thank you for your correspondence of 26 April 2005 in which you seek comments on the inquiry being undertaken by the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment into *Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No. 236: City West – Commercial Civic Centre Land Use Policies, Exemption of Preliminary Assessment and Part D – Definitions*, following referral by the Minister for Planning, Mr Simon Corbell, MLA.

The Property Council of Australia (ACT) strongly advocates the removal of impediments to planning for both City West and Civic, and is supportive of the Government's moves to rationalise planning requirements and approval processes for development for the whole of the City. In particular, we support the removal of the need for Preliminary Assessments.

We are especially pleased that the Draft Variation under consideration now includes matters omitted from the earlier Draft, significantly the issue of Preliminary Assessments. As stated, we support the removal of Preliminary Assessments from the whole of the City and can see that this is contained in the Draft Variation. What is not clear from our reading of the Draft Variation however is whether the lifting of other planning restrictions such as height, gross floor plan and colour of new buildings also applies to the whole of Civic, and not just City West.

We would be grateful for some further clarification on this issue, in particular that the removal of the planning restrictions in City West will also be applied to the rest of Civic, consistent with the announcement contained in the media release issued by the Minister for Planning, Mr Simon Corbell, on 20 April 2005.

In our view, the removal of these restrictions will result in new and innovative development, and will also help to reinforce Civic as the pre-eminent office and development location in Canberra.

The Voice of Leadership

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We are concerned however that the process is taking too long to implement. If it is possible for particular parts of the reform package to be introduced earlier – such as the removal of the need for Preliminary Assessments – then we would be supportive of that approach.

Overall, we believe that progress on the issue of the removal of impediments to planning across the whole of the City needs to be urgently expedited as a matter of priority.

In addition, and in relation to Civic, it should be noted that a holistic approach to car parking in Civic is urgently required. We have recently noted, for example, the recent loss of a large number of surface car parking sites around the southwest, west and northern Civic areas.

Our recent investigations have determined that many of the existing surface car parking sites are operating at well in excess of 90% capacity for most of the week, and that as these sites identified above are replaced by new developments demand for both short and long stay car parking will exceed available capacity. In addition, these new developments will also generate additional demand.

It should also be noted that all of the sites that have been sold and which will be sold in the future for office developments must meet a minimum of 1 space per 100 sq metres GFA in the on site provision. This includes all of City West including Section 61. If these minimum requirements are not met, then it is inevitable that the spill over will create significant problems.

We would be happy to meet with members of your committee to elaborate on these concerns, in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome to this growing problem.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Carter
Executive Director

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