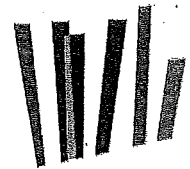




A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE	
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NATIONAL
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CENTRE Canberra

Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal

The Committee resolves to inquire into billboards for
outdoor advertising

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Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the inquiry into billboards for outdoor advertising. As the General Manager of the National Convention Centre, Canberra I support the ongoing need to control and regulate the use and placement of outdoor advertising in its many forms including billboards. For the purpose of this submission I will make comment on the use of smaller billboard advertising such as free standing sandwich boards as well as separately commenting on the use of larger fixed electronic billboards.

Small Free Standing Billboards

My view is there is a serious lack of control either via regulation or enforcement on the use of free standing billboards. The number, quality and content of this form of advertising, particularly in the CBD but also around other places of business such as the National Convention Centre, seems to have no controls. As a result these billboards are spread in high volume, look poor in quality and obstruct other forms of advertising and messaging. They significantly degrade the overall appearance of the public space. The lack of control in this area provides little support or ability to resolve matters of conflict between businesses where one is impacting another business through the placement of these boards. Often the impact is mostly one of aesthetic but this is an important part of business and often heavily invested in. Currently the use of small free standing billboards dilutes messaging and acts as a detractor.

In other jurisdictions such as Darling Harbour Sydney, this is tightly controlled to maintain the high quality appearance of public space vital for stimulating tourism and investment as well as the use of the area by locals. There are strict guidelines in place and these are enforced. The result is a high quality public space enjoyed by many and well invested in. Standardised attractive infrastructure is provided for businesses to advertise to enable effective business promotion whilst not detracting from the appearance of public space.

My recommendation would be controls and guidelines on where they can be placed in relation to proximity to a place of business and someone else's place of business. Controls should also cover quantity allowed, quality and content. The ideal scenario is standardised and controlled infrastructure is put in place to enable business advertising in a controlled and effective way.



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Larger electronic billboards

I again support control over placement, content, quality, brightness and timing of both the infrastructure installation and the content displayed. There is a market need for this advertising and if well done, it can add to the quality of public space and urban feel. Canberra has a particular character and quality that should be maintained but it needs to be balanced by the aims to drive greater levels of business activity especially in the CBD. A sensible balance needs to be established between enabling development and investment and the protection of the appearance and quality of public space. The use of digital signage is both more contemporary and dynamic than static forms of advertising and more in line with a city establishing itself as a modern place of innovation.

Stephen Wood
General Manager
National Convention Centre Canberra