



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 1 -

Mr Darron Marks

Inquiry into DV 364 -

Gungahlin Town

Centre

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My Name is Darron Marks

I do not support DV364 I do not believe the removal of the current prohibition on residential apartments is justified.

I do not believe that the Gungahlin planning refresh snapshot demonstrates that the community have ever been specifically consulted about the proposed change from 100,000smtrs in the Office Core. To a mixed use model that changes this area from the Office core to "Mixed use East"

Based on what I believe is a deliberate attempt to avoid asking the public about if they would be in favor of more residential apartments in the remaining vacant CBD land. The Gungahlin Community Council decided to survey the Gungahlin community and ask this specific question. The results were overwhelming against any further residential apartments being constructed.

This evidence has been presented to Ben Ponton the Director General of EPSDD and Lesley Cameron from Planning and Urban planning. This information provided appears to have been completely disregarded.

I have consistently noted on every new announcement of new apartment complexes being build in Gungahlin. A very high level of concern amongst the population of Gungahlin against these proposals. I do not believe that many of these residents are aware of or would be in favor of the mixed use changes that are proposed in DV364.

I believe local MLA's in consultations with the community are also acutely aware of the publics hostility towards more mixed use development in the remaining CBD vacant land.

I have also expressed my concern to the SLA in private meeting and to Minister Berry directly via video conference. I do not subscribe to the current reasoning that the need for more housing excuses that opinions and future needs of Gungahlin residents.

In fact what is never acknowledged is the considerable contribution already made by Gungahlin residents. With the removal of 100,000smtrs of office space from the Business Park Mixed use north precinct. The reasoning given at the time being that no interest by business has been forthcoming. Therefore the only alternative being to use the merit track to change the zoning rules to build high density residential.

No evidence of what advertisement has been enacted by the ACT Government or the developer to foster that interest has ever been presented. A point I brought up during the DA presentations made by Geocon executives.

The new Bunnings retail precinct located a short distance away clearly demonstrates that there is a demand for more retail outlets. The zoning change to retail I believe would have been a better alternative to the high density housing complexes that currently exist.

The concept floated included a vibrant mixed use retail component in this precinct. This has never materialised with many empty retail stores that have never realised the advertised planning benefits of mixed use developments.

What Gungahlin needs is the future is the preservation of the prohibition on residential apartments in the office core. The primary purpose of all buildings needs to be to provide employment to help alleviate the mass exit of residents to other town centres. That have been planned with employment options as a central planning outcome to keep their town centres vibrant.

Developers like to trumpet that this remaining area is close to light rail. But they do not address the empty trains that travel back into Gungahlin during the day. The reality is that without a dedicated Office precinct "no activation" will be injected into the Gungahlin CBD during the day. We know this is important as the concerns expressed about the economic decline on existing ACT precincts when office workers started working from home.

We have a similar concern that we do not have what has been afforded to other ACT suburbs. And that without the preservation of the remaining 100,000sqmtrs in the office core Gungahlin will be relegated to a dormitory suburb.

What we have acknowledged and understand is there isn't currently enough interest by Federal departments or Business to take up this land. But I would challenge the Planning Directorate and ACT Government. About what has been done similar to the removal of our Business Park to encourage that investment ?

It is in my opinion a red herring to suggest that residential mixed use is the only alternative. Given the public consultation I do not believe has ever specifically addressed mixed use residential introduction. Returning to public consultations on this specific topic is in order.

We are encouraged by a renewed push to ask the Federal Government for more interest in moving more Federal departments to Gungahlin. And that the ACT Government is now considering moving further employment assets to Gungahlin. But more needs to be demonstrated to encourage the widest variety of business or retail development. The recent purchase of CBD vacant land by an education provider is a good example of this sort of out of the box thinking that is required.

The remaining CBD vacant land needs to be protected until we have comprehensive public consultations. And address the Government's total abandonment of the planning principles first set out for the original need to create these Office Core and Business Park precincts in the 2008 planning documents that DV364 seeks to overturn.

Regards Darron