



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Ed Cocks MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT's heritage arrangements

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Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Committee Members,

I am making this submission to the Inquiry into ACT's Heritage Arrangements as a 27 year resident of Hall Village with significant experience and observation of matters related to the preservation and protection of a community where the Division of Hall Precinct Code (2013) is established to protect and maintain the significance and the uniqueness of the village with its thousands of years of Indigenous history and 140 years since gazetted as a village in 1882.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Heritage Protections must take Precedence in “Outcomes Based Planning”:

While the establishment of the ACT Planning Bill 2022 sets up an “outcomes-focussed system”, protection of designated heritage areas and respect of established heritage-based Precinct Codes must take precedence over expediency and marginalisation of heritage protections.

In order to ensure that this can be achieved, the ACT Heritage Unit must be strengthened in both capacity and capability with both additional staffing and appropriate expertise of staff to meet the demands of review and determination of heritage matters in a more fluid “outcomes-focussed” planning system.

Address Ineffective Communication Between ACT Heritage Unit and Other Responsible ACT Government Areas Such as Planning:

On multiple occasions, I have contacted the ACT Heritage Unit to ask about Development Applications that have been notified in Hall Village but been advised by the Heritage Unit that they were as yet unaware of the DA. It is grossly inefficient for applicants as well as those seeking to ensure compliance with the Precinct Code within a community that ACT Planning has not already engaged with the Heritage Unit to ensure compliance with Precinct Codes prior to the notification of a DA for public comment.

Similarly, I have experienced the gap in effective and timely communication between such ACT Government areas as the ACT Property Group and ACT Sports and Recreation and the ACT Heritage Unit in securing advice and approval for works within the heritage precinct and on specific ACT Government

owned buildings. Such extended delays as a consequence of ineffective communication result in increases in costs and undue delays in required works.

Strengthen Monitoring and Accountability to Heritage Requirements in Approved Works:

There are multiple instances in Hall Village where the requirements specified by ACT Heritage in approved Development Applications have been ignored, either during construction or within one or two years of completion of construction. One memorable example of this situation was the construction of “Victoria Square” town houses/ shop fronts in Hall Village where it required the residents of Hall to raise the issues of non-compliance by the builder and community residents were required to be engaged in a lengthy process for compliance action to be taken.

Within the last five years, there are a number of instances in Hall Village where construction has ignored the heritage requirements of the approved DA and there has been no accountability for compliance.

The Heritage Unit needs the mandate to monitor and demand compliance to heritage requirements within approved DAs. In order to be able to ensure compliance, the ACT Heritage Unit must be strengthened in both capacity and capability with both additional staffing and appropriate expertise of staff.

Strengthen the ACT Heritage Unit:

It is very clear through delays, staff absences and declining morale that the level and capability of staffing in the ACT Heritage Unit is incompatible with requirements.

It is of fundamental importance that the ACT Heritage Unit is be strengthened in both capacity and capability with both additional staffing and appropriate expertise of staff to ensure that the unique heritage of the ACT is nurtured and protected for future generations.

Signed,

Robert

Robert Yallop AM

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