



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY  
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## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT's heritage arrangements

(Name withheld)

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Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity  
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The features of Canberra's inner south and northern suburbs that have contributed to a garden city are the preservation of the built and natural character of the heritage areas including the specific heritage precincts, street layouts, the siting and setbacks of houses, the no front fence rule and their open spaces and parks.

In the future all residents buying into heritage precincts need to be aware of their responsibilities and be guided in ensuring they meet the mandatory requirements of the ACT Heritage Register. There needs to be effective penalties for non-compliance. In the past twenty years there has been considerable loss of heritage value in the inner south/inner north of Canberra's suburbs through lack of coordination and cohesion between the federal and ACT governments. As a significant radial from New Parliament House, Melbourne Avenue is an example of the cumulative effect of adjacent developments detracting from the heritage precinct on the Forrest side of Melbourne Avenue. Further the ACT Government has allowed the redevelopment of the houses on the Deakin side of Melbourne Avenue to sit at odds with the character of Forrest's heritage precinct on the opposite side of the street.

In the past, the ACT Heritage Council and Unit has been significantly under-resourced to enforce commitment and compliance by developers and individuals. If the proposed district and ACT plans become law, there will be less recognition of heritage. The Territory Plan and Inner South District Strategy focus on the natural environment and mostly ignore the built environment. For the future, the ACT Heritage Council and Unit will need independence and resources to manage the increasing pressure of redevelopment and review required likely under these new planning documents.

In the context of climate change, the broader heritage areas including the heritage precincts will be a major contribution to environmental savings due to the green space required in proportion to built space out of the total block size as well as a minimum ratio of permeable surface. In particular, the monitoring and review of the development applications for Mr Fluffy asbestos blocks in the heritage precincts has been a low priority. Several such blocks in Forrest have been allowed to remain vacant with new owners for many years after their compulsory clearance presumably because the new owners are awaiting a more favourable development regime within the new planning system. There does not seem to be any pressure from the ACT government to require that DAs be submitted under the current system.

Overall the result has been an ever decreasing number, proportionally, of heritage listed properties predominantly located within Heritage Precincts and broader heritage areas. Further the future and current owners of heritage properties will need some incentives such as rate relief to balance the increasing financial pressures.

In the future, the Heritage Council and Unit must be empowered to act as the final arbiter/decision maker in matters pertaining to Heritage above the land planning and development system to achieve appropriate conservation of the ACT's natural and cultural heritage places and objects, including Aboriginal places and objects.

No publication of personal details requested.

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