

TO:

The Secretary
Standing Committee on
Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services
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Canberra, 21 June 2012

**Submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee Inquiry
into Draft Territory Plan Variation No 306**

Dear Ms Strkalj,

With reference to the above the Heart Foundation ACT welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Standing Committee into the draft variation to the Territory Plan 306. The document provides a comprehensive framework that potentially can improve the built form of new suburbs.

Australia is one of the most overweight of the developed nations, with overweight and obesity affecting about one in two Australian adults and up to one in four children. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the country, with approximately 23,000 deaths in 2007. The environment can have a significant influence on each person's level of physical activity and has the potential to save the health system a significant amount of money. Obesity (overweight excluded) was estimated to cost Australia \$58.2 billion (financial cost \$8.28 billion, lost wellbeing \$49.9 billion).

Canberra has for many years been planned around the car – which is a key contributor to high rates of physical inactivity and in turn high rates of obesity and chronic disease.

The Heart Foundation has had an ongoing interest in the area of urban planning and health over the past 12 years, beginning with the release of Supportive Environments for Physical Activity in 1996 by the South Australian Division.

In 2009 the Heart Foundation, in partnership with the Planning Institute of Australia and the Australian Local Government Association, a national guide to promote healthy living called *Healthy Spaces and Places* (copy attached). The purpose of this document is to guide communities in relation to planning, designing and creating sustainable communities that encourage healthy living.

Healthy Spaces and Places outlines the particular need for active places and shows the strong links between peoples overall health and regular physical activity. The document identifies the following key design principles to plan for healthy and more active communities:

- Active transport;
- Aesthetics;
- Connectivity;
- Environments for all people;
- Mixed density;
- Mixed land use;
- Parks and open space;
- Safety and surveillance;
- Social inclusion;
- Support infrastructure.

The Heart Foundation has also released a position statement on *The built environment and walking* (copy attached) that underpins interrelated factors associated with transport- related walking. This includes spatial land-form pattern, population density and mixed land use.

Sprawl is a favourite planning model in Australian cities. With it comes a dependence on car use. At the same time investment in public transport has declined over the past two decades and viability of public transport diminishes the lower the population density that it serves. These elements taken together have caused many residents to opt out of active transport modes. This is a situation that will be untenable in the future as oil prices rise, and increasing physical activity levels becomes even more essential for good health.

In late 2010, the Active Living National team commissioned Professor Billie Giles-Corti (Centre for the Built Environment and Health, University of Western Australia) to undertake an evidence review on 'Density, housing, equity and open space: Population health impacts across the lifespan'. A copy of our findings is attached to this submission.

Most recently we published the *Active Living Impact Checklist* (copy attached) for developments in the ACT. While urban planners and related professionals work to provide good design in all their projects, the Heart Foundation ACT would like to provide support through usable and specific guidance in the ACT in creating places and spaces that support Active Living.

We trust this information will be useful for the important work around this particular inquiry. Should you have any question or require further information please don't hesitate to contact Greg Mews on 04 22 645 179 or per email Greg.Mews@heartfoundation.org.au.

Yours faithfully,



Tony Stubbs

Chief Executive Officer
Heart Foundation – ACT