

TO:

Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and
Territory and Municipal Services
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Canberra ACT 2601



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Canberra, 19th January 2010

**RE: Submission to Inquiry into RZ3 and RZ4 Residential Redevelopment
Policy – Inner North Canberra**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

With reference to the above I would like to submit a recommendation from the Heart Foundation ACT concerning the future residential redevelopment in the Inner North of Canberra.

The Heart Foundation welcomes the inquiry and sees great opportunities to create a healthy community. Canberra has for many years been planned around the car and created urban sprawl– and as a result there are increasing rates of physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour, which in turn is increasing rates of obesity and chronic disease.

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 built 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).

The Heart Foundation has developed 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 is for 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.

Recently 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.

A reduction of traditional contemporary lifestyle supported through urban densification represents a significant contribution to changing existing development practise that gives often priority to cars, urban sprawl rather than encourage create healthy, liveable, more sustainable and active environments.

In order to achieve a more sustainable, healthy, liveable, safe and vibrant Canberra it is essential to create higher and mixed densities using a holistic framework as that is outlined in *Healthy Spaces and Places*.

Benefits of urban densification in Inner North

A recent study of European urban residents has provided evidence that higher densities in combination with aesthetically-pleasing open space areas were more than three times as likely to be physical active. People living in more denser environments are more likely to get involved in their own community that can strengthens social networks and reduces depression as well as mental illness. A maximised housing choice will promote a more diverse community and caters for various stages of life.

The creation of higher density development in areas of high amenity, should coincide with activity centres to maximise access and convenience to services.

Urban mix of density and public transport

A range and mix of housing types such as dual occupancies, multi story buildings in different development forms, size and height is encouraged by the Heart Foundation. A higher density with well designed residential buildings and provision of an adequate housing choice will maximise infrastructure and can support efficient forms of public transport.

Currently more than 10 percent of all car trips are less than one kilometre (which is the equivalent to a 10 minute walk) and 30 percent are less than 3 kilometres which is unsustainable and unhealthy. By creating higher densities developments should create a context and corresponding to its surrounding development, public transport with supporting infrastructure including footpaths, public open space and cycle paths, traffic calming measures and narrower roads.

Heart Foundation wished to support the urban densification through redevelopment and can create:

- Significant improvements to public transport usage and the integration of transport services;
- Opportunities for increased private investments and business innovation;
- Highest form of density at strategic location in particular near transit centres;
- Higher quality buildings design which contributes to the function, attractiveness and conviviality of the area;
- Good streetscape integration and enhance public space surveillance;
- Creation of fair access to all services and employment opportunities;
- Provision of a housing choice.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Stubbs". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Tony" and last name "Stubbs" clearly legible.

Tony Stubbs
Chief Executive Officer
Heart Foundation – ACT