

From: Chris Endrey
Sent: Tuesday, 20 June 2017 3:44 PM
To:
Subject: Submission into the Inquiry into Billboards
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Dear the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal,

I am writing to express my strong support in favour of maintaining the existing ban on billboard advertising in the Territory, with a desire that the Committee consider expanding the current regulations to also prohibit roadside vehicle advertising.

Whilst introducing only some advertising into our skyline might initially seem innocuous, its vast deleterious impacts upon our psychological health are well-documented. Offering large franchises the opportunity to advertise against local businesses is also a market distortion that the Assembly mightn't otherwise desire. Such costs must be considered against any perceived financial benefits in this review.

If the intention is to increase the vibrancy of the capital, this same end could be far better achieved by working with the Territory's artistic community to develop platforms for sharing the many cultural products and events that are in and of the Territory. The Canberra Theatre's banners and the Capital Hill and Northbourne/MacArthur flowerbeds are good examples of such positive uses of public space. Our current position of an unpolluted skyline offers a starker opportunity to frame the city as an exciting centre of cultural production, unmarred by the commercial shrieking of other Australian capitals.

Of course, once any absolute ban has been eased, it becomes far easier for future and potentially less scrupulous Governments to legislate further dilutions, which can have only one inevitable end: the continued encroachment of private interests into our public spaces.

In a piece published by RiotACT on 20 June 2017 exploring the matter, there was a virtual consensus amongst the many commenters across all of their platforms: the community is strongly opposed to billboard advertising in the ACT. If the only case then for expanding advertising spaces in the ACT is a financial one, a broader community consultation will be worth pursuing to explore revenue-raising in ways that cost less than sacrificing the stillness of our public space.

I am optimistic that the Committee identifies the strong amenity and tourism benefits of our unique public spaces and will see fit to preserve these spaces into the future.

Thanks for considering this submission.

Chris Endrey

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