



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES
Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Chair), Miss Candice Burch MLA (Deputy Chair)
Ms Tara Cheyne MLA, Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Nature in Our City

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Dear Sir/ Ma'am,

Submission to Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services

Key to this submission is to see the city from the point of view of people as pedestrians and cyclists, people who have a disability, people who are active and inactive, as well as from the point of view of our amazing animals, living and moving in daily life to connect and thrive. A shift from the car culture and urban sprawl to increasing connection with nature as a priority in planning is an excellent initiative. There is considerable evidence that demonstrates that connecting more with nature and each other leads to a healthier and happier community.

Have you ever tried to walk from the City or the Lake to the arboretum or from O'Connor Ridge to Black Mountain to the city? Walking from urban centres to key nature reserves and tourist attractions around Canberra requires crossing some major roads. If you are a pedestrian, or cyclist, or an animal this can be hazardous, stressful and unpleasant.

The following points are submitted for consideration.

- Connect the Centenary Trail – Similar to the City to the Lake concept create a seamless connection of the Centenary Trail for all to safely move and enjoy, including animals and people. Roads that cut through nature reserves may need a land bridge overhead, or key parts of the roads put under or over the nature connection. This would be an enhanced wonderful nature reserve and walk of a world class standard and attract interest from locals and tourists.
- Connect the mountains to the lake and connect nature parks/ bush reserves to other bush reserves E.g. Mt Ainslie to Jerrabomberra Wetlands to Red Hill to Mt Taylor to Mt Majura to Gungahlin, Mulligans Flat, Kaleen to O'Connor Ridge to Bruce to Black Mountain to the Arboretum to the Lake etc.... with safe wide land bridges for animals and people to cross. This again may require critical parts of the road to be connected under or over nature crossings – koala crossings, kangaroo crossings, kind crossings, kids crossings, and wombat walkways. Imagine if Canberra could reintroduce koala's to some parts of our nature reserves, what a boost it would be for tourism and political photo opportunities not to mention nature!
- Create the four seasons in the City – to remind us to get out of the office or apartment and experience the joy and benefits each season brings—similar to what has been done with Skate in the City and the grass gardens and deck chairs for summer, tree decorations for winter— changing every year with different creative designs.

- Contain the Canberra footprint to what it is now with no further expansion, would drive us to creative and sustainable development. As it stands the Canberra footprint is quite large for the population and we can learn much from cities that are forced to think creatively with limited resources. Revisit the Burley Griffin design and see what positives we can take from that. The current design has created a car dependent city and future expansion will add to that. A large footprint is expensive and inefficient to provide services and amenities such as public transport, power and community facilities such as parks and schools and can increase isolation as people tend to travel more in cars.
- Reduce concrete use and use porous surfaces for landscaping including pollinating plants and native grasses, etc. as an alternative– eg the new park in Canberra by the Lake, Henry Roland Park, while providing improved amenity is not good for enabling access for people and animals to the water and the concrete doesn't allow for water to permeate the soil and reduce heat. The extensive use of concrete or hard surfaces around the city and Town Centres, increases temperatures in these areas, is not beautiful and could be enhanced with garden beds and porous surfaces.
- Replant the trees to replace the mature trees that are continuing to be removed around Canberra e.g., the loss of London Plane trees in Cooyong Street over the past few years, the loss of mature trees in Mort and Lonsdale Street Braddon, the loss of mature trees and around the Canberra Olympic Pool which once had beautiful gardens and the loss of eucalyptus trees in Negus Crescent, Watson are just a few examples that are in need of replanting.
- Create more parks in the City and Town Centres – Glebe Park is the only real park in Civic and this is very small to some of the great parks in cities around the world. Woden and Belconnen don't really have a decent park (other than Lake Ginninderra for Belconnen). As urban density increases in the City and town centres more people will benefit greatly from close access to a beautiful park.
- Create beautiful gardens, no matter how small, with disabled access, for people in hospitals- to improve quality of life for patients and to aid healing as well as to create peaceful places for people to connect with nature during very stress times.
- Create more community gardens – these are a great way for people to connect with nature, the seasons and with each other as well as get fit while gardening and enjoy a healthier diet.
- Create more natural wetland parks like in Lyneham and Dickson – people and nature both travel to be there together daily.
- Be inclusive of aboriginal connection to country and caring for country in all future planning.

For consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Nolan