

The Secretary,
Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Municipal Service,
Office of the ACT Legislative Assembly.
Canberra ACT 2601

Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 308 Cooyong Street Urban Renewal Area

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this redevelopment.

Our comments address the heading:

3. the height, scale and associated impacts of the proposed redevelopment:

We believe the rezoning objective of urban intensification close to shopping centres and transport can be met **without high rise development**:

A search of online literature on the issue: *Are High Rises Bad or Good for People?* reveals the following:

- High rises tend to be more satisfactory when they are expensive developments, located in prestigious neighbourhoods (eg with water views), and residents choose to live in them (rather than being used as allocated welfare housing). They appear to suit young mobile singles and childless couples who like to move regularly.
- General consensus is that the high rise is unsatisfactory for the family with small children
- Residents of high-rises are likely to have fewer friendships in the buildings and certainly help each other less (than in low rise housing). The only connection for many is via the lift.
- A nationwide study in the US of the elderly found that residents of low buildings liked their housing more than residents of taller buildings
- At the societal level, when added as redevelopment, they burden existing services and the infrastructure, worsen traffic problems and damage the character of the neighbourhood.
- High rises create wind tunnels and block sunlight from nearby buildings.
- A recent NSW Energy Australia study has found that a high rise apartment uses 30% more power than a typical detached house due to the need for good lighting in common areas such as foyers and carparks, power for lifts, gymnasiums and swimming pools. Likewise, high rise buildings generated four times as much CO2 as villas/townhouses and three times as much as low and medium rise buildings.

Before proceeding with this proposal, we would like the Committee to consider the trends in modern urban planning and to modify the proposal taking into account:

- The low rise, high density sustainable living which has been used in Malmö Bo01 in Sweden. This development density of 120 persons per hectare equates to about 8 times the typical Australian urban density. (Reid has 17.7 people/hectare, Braddon has 29.5 *ABS March 2010*). Malmö Bo01 was achieved by building highly sustainable buildings 2-5 storeys in height with architectural diversity and high quality in building standards. All heritage buildings and public open spaces were protected. The proposed DV308 planned 500 people per hectare is totally unwarranted in Canberra.
- London planning policy which in 2010 endorsed “garden cities” ie planned communities based around low-rise homes and green space.

- The Melbourne City Design Award winning planning report *“Transforming Australian Cities”* under architect Rob Adams in 2009 which recommended redevelopments of 4-8 storeys along major transport routes in the city, based on very high quality design at street level.

The concerns of Canberra residents were clearly expressed in the ACT Land & Planning Authority Report of 2011 *“Time to Talk about Canberra 2030 as a Healthy City”* where they indicated (Page 10) *“a general desire for green building and urban design that makes their town centres more like walkable urban villages but there is nervousness and scepticism about high rise and intensive development.”*

This view has been reinforced by the submissions already received during the ACTPLA DV308 consultations, with only 2.9% of them in favour of the redevelopment in its proposed form.

Sue and John Brudenall

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