

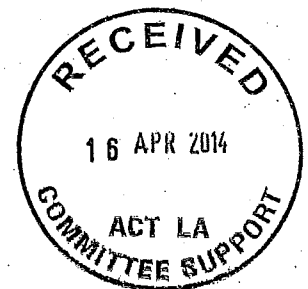


Australian Institute of Architects

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16 April 2014

Mr Mick Gentleman
Government Whip and Assistant Speaker
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601
gentleman@parliament.act.gov.au



Dear Mr Gentleman,

Re: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (PROJECT FACILITATION) AMENDMENT BILL 2014

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Institute of Architects (ACT), (the Institute) in relation to the above Bill.

As you will be aware the Bill proposes major changes to Canberra's planning system and will clearly have significant consequences for the Territory Plan, some anticipated by the Government, and possibly others not yet foreseen. We consider that a simpler faster approval process is long overdue however; the Institute has significant concern that the legislation may override the controls that ensure privacy, solar access, noise abatement, heritage and trees.

You will also be aware that many in the community share our concern about the scope of the proposed changes and their potential consequences. We presume that this is why the Government has referred the Bill to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services for further consideration. We understand that the Committee is to report back to the Legislative Assembly by 6 May 2014.

Taking account of the Easter and ANZAC Day public holidays there are only 11 working days between today and 6 May. In addition, the ACT School holidays occur during this period (from Saturday 12 to Sunday 27 April) adding to the many Canberra residents who will be out of town.

For public input to be sought, the Committee must call for submissions, hear and consider evidence, and prepare its report all in a period of 11 working days. Given the importance of this matter, and the magnitude and complexity of the draft legislation (the Bill itself is 64 pages long, and the Explanatory Memorandum a further 52 pages), this timeframe appears to be grossly inadequate.

A failure by the Committee to allow appropriate time for the preparation of submissions from interested parties makes the whole purpose of referring the matter to the Committee ingenuous and, engaging in public consultation impossible.

We urge you in the strongest of terms to extend the period of Committee consideration by 45 days to allow for full and informed public consideration and comment to be available to the Committee in its deliberations and, enable the possibility of improvements to the legislation based on this consideration.

We look forward to a favourable response to this request.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Wilson
President, ACT Chapter
Australia Institute of Architects