



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, Ms Tara Cheyne MLA,
Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

MEDIA RELEASE

Inquiry into the value of the natural environment to an urbanising Canberra

The Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services invites submissions to its inquiry into the value of the natural environment to an urbanising Canberra.

The Committee's terms of reference for this inquiry are attached.

On the lodgement of the Committee's terms of reference on its website today, the Committee Chair, Suzanne Orr MLA, said:

"Canberra is often referred to as the "Bush Capital" which is not surprising given the extent of nature we've always had within our city. In years gone by, maintaining a natural environment within our city boundaries has been made easier by the smaller population to land space ratio.

But as we know, Canberra is growing and with this population growth comes the need to accommodate everyone who is catching on to what longer term residents have always known – Our Bush Capital is a great place to call home.

It is well known that expanding populations lead to expanding urban areas which can and do put pressure on the natural environment. This is especially the case in a land locked city where the options for urban development either become developing up or developing out.

Whether it be developing up or out, in their own ways each puts pressure on the balance between our urban and natural environments. The good news is it's not necessarily a case of having one option or the other – but as the challenge becomes a bit trickier there is a need for a higher level of proactivity to make sure that as Canberra urbanises we always keep nature in our city.

This inquiry provides Canberrans with a great opportunity to have their say about nature in our city as our bush capital grows and I look forward to hearing people's thoughts."

The Committee's terms of reference and other materials are accessible via the ACT Legislative Assembly website:

<https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/standing-committees-current-assembly/standing-committee-on-environment-and-transport-and-city-services/inquiry-on-the-value-of-the-natural-environment-to-an-urbanising-canberra>

The Committee invites submissions from interested organisations and individuals to its inquiry.

Written submissions should be lodged with the Committee Secretary by close of business on Friday, 8 June 2018.

The Committee prefers all submissions to be lodged in electronic form (Word format), although handwritten submissions are acceptable. All submissions, including those sent electronically, must include a name, an email address, a postal address and a telephone contact number. Personal contact details will not be published.

Submissions should be forwarded to:

The Committee Secretary, Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services, Legislative Assembly for the ACT, GPO Box 1020, CANBERRA ACT 2601.

Email: LACommitteeETCS@parliament.act.gov.au

The Committee intends to hold public hearings in August/September 2018 to assist its inquiry. Please be aware that the final witness selection rests with the Committee.

Further information on lodging a submission is available at: <http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/in-committees/Getting-involved>.

Any further enquiries can also be directed to the Committee Secretary, on 62050199 or email at: LACommitteeETCS@parliament.act.gov.au

Statement End—23 February 2018

Terms of Reference

Inquiry into the value of the natural environment to an urbanising Canberra

The Standing Committee has resolved to conduct the following inquiry –

Noting the importance of the natural environment to Canberra, including the level of public support for nature and the natural environment, the growing importance of urban open spaces and bushland reserves and the benefits they bring to Canberra and opportunities for development of Blue—through water—and Green—through natural form—infrastructure in Canberra resolved to inquire into and report on the matters affecting the value of the natural environment to an urbanising Canberra, including:

1. The level of public support for and satisfaction with amount and quality nature and natural environment areas in Canberra, particularly in urban areas.
2. The types of nature and natural environmental areas within Canberra e.g. urban open spaces or bushland reserves and the existing or potential benefits and challenges they bring to Canberra's:
 - a. Social amenity;
 - b. Economic development;
 - c. Biodiversity; and/or
 - d. Climate resilience.
3. Opportunities for Blue (water) and or Green (natural) Infrastructure in Canberra including:
 - a. Functional requirements of proposed infrastructure;
 - b. Cost and Maintenance considerations;
 - c. Amenity benefits; and
 - d. Conservation and biodiversity benefits.
4. Managing the interface between the natural environment and urban areas particularly in regards to conserved environmental areas.
5. Current policy or regulatory settings that impede the integration of the natural environment within optimal urban development and design.
6. Any other relevant matter.

The Committee intends reporting to the Assembly on the matter by the end of 2018.

Adopted 6 December 2017 and announced 22 February 2018