



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

Jo Clay MLA (Chair), Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy), Mark Parton MLA

Submission No 45 -

Ms Helen Gladman

Inquiry into Giralang

Shops

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Dear Committee

I wish to take advantage of the opportunity to submit comments on the issue of the Giralang shops inquiry.

I have lived in Giralang with my husband since 2006. We have continued to live in the area all this time because Giralang has a lot to offer its residents. We enjoy the proximity to the various town centres, we enjoy the green spaces (Palmerville, the pine forests) the accessibility for cycling and the broader experience of living in Belconnen. We intend to live here for the foreseeable future.

The main blight on the 16 years we have lived here has been the ongoing uncertainty of the site of the Giralang shops. We arrived in the very last days of the shops; there was a restaurant there and not much else for that last period. We arrived hoping that there would be a new chapter to look forward to, with regard to the shops, with no idea it would go on to be an eyesore and a battleground for the next 16 years (and potentially longer). We had seen the success of the Kaleen shops and we had chosen this area because of the potential in the new development.

We had not chosen other suburbs that had similarly derelict shops. We believed in the value of local shops and all they contribute to a community. They provide a meaningful focal point. When people can walk or cycle to shops, when you can support a local business and meet members of the community in such settings, the benefits to residents are manifold. It took us a long time to feel connected to the community. We came from Turner where we had enjoyed the thriving local shops, cafes and bars. It made the suburb a home. Giralang did not feel like a home for a long time - since joining groups such as the Buy Nothing facebook groups and others with a general community presence, Giralang has felt more unified. What we need now to further improve this, is a resolution to the shops site issue.

I have engaged in some of the consultative processes. I have attended meetings and spoken with local members of the legislative assembly when opportunities arise. Frankly even this minimal engagement with the process has felt futile. People have worked longer and harder than I have to get traction on this process and I imagine their sense of futility is greater.

I believe that at this point, all we want is resolution. If that means the site is cleared and all discussion of development ceases, that would be acceptable but not ideal. Preferably, a resolution would include agreement between the government and the developers which will provide a meaningful outcome. Some use of the site that meets community needs - there has been ample community consultation to find out what we want and need. This is a pool that can still be drawn from. It's a very busy street - with the school and residential premises and it's also a solid bus route. To leave the street in this state of neglect and to allow it to be an ongoing political and commercial battleground is absurd.

I look forward to a report from this inquiry that shows we are being heard but even more, I look forward to action. It's overdue.

Regards

Helen Gladman  
[REDACTED]