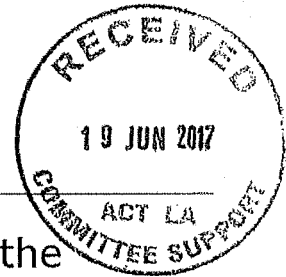




Stuart McMillen



Submission to the **Inquiry into Billboards** by the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal

18 June 2017,

I am a Canberra resident who is involved in the community in many ways. I am the community representative of the entrepreneurial coworking space Entry 29. I coordinate the monthly community events Sunday Assembly Canberra and Green Drinks Canberra, and I volunteer with the Australian Science Communicators.

Though I am entrepreneurially-minded, I think that the economy should operate within limits, for the benefit of all.

I have lived in Canberra for over four years, and I have always appreciated the fact that the city is free from billboard advertisements. Compared to advertising-drenched cities like Brisbane and Sydney, Canberra allows the natural beauty of architecture and eucalyptus trees to dominate. We all share this beauty together.

Any move to relax our current billboard advertising restrictions threatens the current beauty that Canberra enjoys.

I object to billboard advertising because it privatises the public spaces of our city.

Today we, the community, enjoy the shared benefit of spaces that are free from billboard advertising. If the ACT Government relaxes the laws, we all lose this ability to be free from visual pollution. Once they are up, we cannot avoid having to look at the billboards for erectile dysfunction pills, zero-calorie energy drinks, clairvoyants, or Fidget Spinners™.


We enter a situation where certain advertisers profit, and the rest of the community suffers visual pollution at the expense of a few winners.

When this occurs, it is typically at the expense of the poor. Community groups in leafy, well-heeled suburbs like Forrest and Yarralumla may have the clout to prevent billboards from being erected in their neighbourhoods. But the residents of, say, Dunlop or Florey may be treated as an acceptable target for billboards. This is a situation that we can only avoid by keeping firm, consistent regulations across the Territory.

I strongly urge you to keep the ACT regulations preventing billboards as they currently stand.

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