

Submission

To: The Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal
Re: Inquiry into Billboards

From: Jack Kelly
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I grew up in Canberra and recently returned to start a new job. Compared to other cities I've lived in, Canberra is exceptionally beautiful and the ban on billboard advertising is a large part of that.

Billboard advertising is a tremendous waste of visual space. It is often placed near major roads to be seen from the inside of a car travelling at high speed, which means that the message has to be extremely simple to be seen and processed. This means that billboard advertising is extremely inefficient: low information-per-unit-area but also requiring a lot of physical space.

In addition, the inability to deliver a complex message means billboards are often used by sleazy or dodgy companies[1]. Even otherwise-respectable brands cannot seem to help themselves, and stoop to fit the medium[2].

Large billboard advertising really is a relic of another era, as modern online advertising allows businesses to reach out to and engage with the customers who would be most interested in their products and services. Allowing it into Canberra will only have a "Red Queen" effect: businessess will set up billboards, but once they all start shouting over each other, Canberrans will tune out and none will really be heard.


Lifting the ban on billboards is not a decision to be made lightly, because it is one of those decisions that will be very hard to reverse. I urge you to retain the existing regulations preventing billboards, and to preserve one of the things that makes Canberra so special.

[1]:

http://nnimgt-a.akamaihd.net/transform/v1/crop/frm/silverstone-feed-data/d73b5ca2-ee36-43db-bf65-f0be46265124.jpg/r0_0_729_410_w1200_h678_fmax.jpg

[2]:

<http://resources3.news.com.au/images/2013/10/05/1226733/380999-boobs-billboard-brisbane.jpg>

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