

Submission to ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal Inquiry into Billboards

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Australians have the fifth highest level of per capita consumption expenditure in the world (http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.CON.PRVT.PC.KD?year_high_desc=true).

Consumption drives energy demand, deforestation and waste accumulation, with flow-on impacts of biodiversity loss, pollution, land degradation and climate change. There are a host of other negative impacts of consumption – obesity, poor self-image and mental health, widening wealth inequality, domination of our economy and society by profit-taking corporations. Our planet simply cannot sustain the current level of consumption by humans.

Advertising increases consumption. Therefore, if as a society we are going to seriously tackle our addiction to consumption, we need to address the advertising that drives that consumption.

We should be reducing advertising, particularly in public spaces where it is unavoidable, not increasing it.

Use the space instead to increase public artwork or other activities that bring communities together and build participation. Reduce promotion of consumer goods and instead promote community services. We need to be fostering a culture of responsible resource use and management, a circular economy where repairing and recycling is valued above disposal and replacement.

	A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE
SUBMISSION NUMBER	10
DATE AUTH'D FOR PUBLICATION	27/6/17