



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Environment,
Planning, Transport and City Services

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Petition 002-25: Hawker Village shops redevelopment

Submission number: 059

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From:
To: [LA Committee - Environment](#)
Subject: Petition 002-25, Hawker Village shops redevelopment
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Good afternoon

I wish to provide some comments in relation to the proposed (by Woolworths) redevelopment of the Hawker Village shops.

Support for redevelopment

I am a long term resident of Weetangera having lived here first during my primary and secondary schooling years from 1970 until 1984, and then again since 2013. As such, I am very familiar with the Hawker shopping precinct. Hawker shops in its current form is rundown and tired and has been so for quite some time. It feels to me that little has changed since the early 1980's when I would walk through the area on the way home from high school. For quite some time after returning to the area in 2013 I conducted our main weekly household shop at Hawker. After the Woolworths store changed to a "Metro" format, however, I was not prepared to pay the increased prices on products and reduced amenity for trolley shoppers. I now instead travel to the nearby Belconnen Mall for grocery shopping (with occasional top-ups at Jamison). As it stands my wife and I have largely stopped visiting Hawker shops other than for sporadic trips to the Post Office and every now and then for a last minute item from the Woolworths Metro. The other factor which influenced my decision to stop going to Hawker was what felt like increasing numbers of beggars, vagrants, and overly aggressive charity workers who would position themselves just outside the Woolworths entryway.

I believe that a refresh is long overdue. Whilst I was comfortable with the initial proposal put forward by Woolworths I am aware of, and am comfortable with, the nature of the changes which they have now been asked by the Government to consider in a revised proposal. Equally, if there is sufficient interest from other supermarket brands to warrant some form of broader market testing exercise I would be supportive of that.

Regardless, I strongly support redevelopment of some form at Hawker shops.

Friends of Hawker Village

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I am aware that a group calling themselves the Friends of Hawker Village (FoHV) are actively advocating against, firstly, the proposed direct sale to Woolworths of land at the Hawker shopping centre, and secondly it seems ANY form of redevelopment of the existing supermarket and adjacent areas. Their concerns seem focussed solely on a desire to maintain an outside car park. They appear to be offering no positive alternatives or looking for other opportunities which a refresh of the precinct could offer the community.

I understand this is the same group who successfully prevented (or at least were very influential

in doing so) a previous (circa 2012) Government led attempt to revitalise the precinct. It is not clear to me how large the group is however my belief is that it is comparatively small and I feel does not at all represent the views of the broader Hawker (and adjacent suburbs) community.

I am very concerned that the FoHV may bring undue influence to bear on the current deliberations. Their early messaging suggested, for example, that should the sale of land to Woolworths be approved then the proposed redevelopment was a done deal. They did not seem to understand that any land sale would be conditional on a DA process which of course includes further public consultation. One member of the group I spoke to told me that the proposed underground parking was to be pay parking, information which I have not seen anywhere in the Woolworths proposal documentation and which felt to me to be disinformation. These are similar scare tactics to those which I recall the group employed in 2012 when their messaging suggested that the draft Master Plan for the area was effectively a development proposal about to be implemented.

Whilst the FoHV are of course entitled to their views it is absolutely vital that there is an opportunity for the views of ALL residents to be considered if there is to be an outcome that is in the best interests of the entire community. This Inquiry of course goes to that goal.

Thank you for considering the above remarks.

Regards,
Denis Bowler