



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES

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Submission Cover Sheet

Nature in Our City

Submission Number: 22

Date Authorised for Publication: 8 August 2018

The Committee Secretary

Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

Dear Committee

NATURE IN OUR CITY

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the subject matter.

Our comments follow:

Much of Canberra's appeal as the 'Bush Capital, Garden City', as envisaged by Marion and Walter, is being 'gobbled up' by the rubber stamping of rural to urban zoning changes as new housing "developments", without any apparent concerns for our beautiful, fragile and unique natural environment. This unlimited and uncontrolled sprawl on the bush fire prone ACT fringes and the irresponsible, ugly, multi-unit overcrowding in existing, established suburbs of course affects the once pristine natural environment, not only for our native fauna and flora but humans as well.

Endangered species are slowly disappearing or are 'being "virtually" moved' by our Government to hostile new homes in environmental offsets!! (whatever this means?). Some new rural developments have chased our unique wildlife away from their forever homes – how shameful! - how cruel are we becoming?

If our Government is serious about preserving and protecting "Nature in our City" (and there is no reason to believe it isn't, especially as it has set up a Standing Committee to report) it need look no further than in its own backyard where it is a competitive developer in West Belconnen. Is it setting a good example to other developers and the Canberra community by recently applying for an exemption to prepare an EIS - for its own project? Surely the Government's Ginninderry project is being environmentally assessed in the Impact Track for which an EIS is mandatory! – for everybody including our Government?

Our ACT Government must set an exemplary example to other developers of how to respect our natural environment and 'Nature in our City'. It can demonstrate to other developers that it is doing the right thing and taking all environmental precautions by preparing an EIS for public scrutiny and comment on its own project.

Because of the vulnerability of our sensitive natural environment all efforts by our bureaucrats must be to protect nature at all costs.

Our Government doesn't appear particularly concerned about the potential harm and OH&S dangers to nature and humans in its Ginninderry development from:

the current and long used West Belconnen 'Tip' and recyclable dumps

'Mr Fluffy' layered (not buried) mountain of carcinogenic, asbestos contaminated, building rubble

Parkwood Poultry Farm noxious aromas, insect infestations (mosquitoes?), vermin and feral animals (foxes, wild dogs and cats)

The danger to humans and fauna of overhead and nearby High Tension Electricity Wires

and nearby reported (near the sewerage works) bagged, asbestos fibre dump (or is this still being dumped at the Mugga Lane Tip?).

All these OH&S hazards to humans and wildlife are slap bang in the middle of its proposed cross-border suburbs.

Bush fire threat....

Perhaps one of the most critical threats and dangers to 'Nature in our city' is bushfires. Many of us can still remember the 1 January 2003 firestorm and ember attack which devastated our capital. The dangers to the natural environment including fauna and flora by urban sprawl adjacent to tinder dry sclerophyll forests on the city's fringe cannot be stressed enough. As witnessed, a fire can completely destroy 'Nature in our city' in such a short time. We need to be vigilant and ever wary of a repeat terrifying event.

Each of these OH&S potential dangers to fauna and humans needs to be addressed with succinct EISs.

In order to protect our natural environment and 'Nature in our city' it is important for our Government to take all necessary precautions to ensure this happens.

Even in established suburbs, which are becoming overbuilt and overcrowded it is just as important to protect the natural environment. For this reason we believe that **ALL** DAs and DVs, however minor, must be assessed in the IMPACT TRACK and thus by definition be supported with an EIS. This will go a long way to alerting all developers that our natural environment is precious to us all and that the protection and preservation of 'Nature in our city' is of utmost importance.

Furthermore, EIS and environmental reports must be assessed by an expert, professional, independent/apolitical body so no perceived 'Conflict of Interest' (PCOI) can be challenged. A Professional, Dedicated, Environmental Group such as EDO could fill this role.

As Canberra sprawls into new, pristine environments we must be wary of this and treat and respect our association with our unique and wonderful fauna and flora.

Perhaps the subject of 'Nature in the City' is misleading as our sprawl now reflects the shifting city boundary into the bush. Perhaps 'City in Nature' or similar is more appropriate!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

We wish you all the best with this important study.

P. R. Temple & advisers

8 June 2018