



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

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For the attention of the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport
and City Services regarding the
Inquiry into the value of the natural environment to an urbanising Canberra

We thank the Standing Committee for this opportunity to present a submission to this inquiry into what we consider to be an area of key importance in our own endeavours as volunteers.

We regard Canberra's urban and peri-urban reserves as an extremely valuable and important resource, both socially and environmentally, and in our view it is crucial to strike the correct balance between social amenity and the environmental values offered by those reserves.

In the case of the Canberra Nature Park (CNP) reserves, which include the Pinnacle Nature Reserve, their stated primary function is the conservation of natural values. While we recognise and appreciate the benefits to the community of these reserves in terms of health and recreation, we would urge the Committee to keep this primary purpose of conservation in clear view during their deliberations.

As islands of natural habitat, including some that are relatively unspoiled, the CNP reserves provide excellent social amenity in terms of education, recreational pleasure, personal wellbeing and social cohesion through activities such as:

- Guided walks and other instructional activities
- Regular weed and rubbish removal activities
- Coordinated school excursions
- Tree planting and other landscape restoration events
- Walking, jogging and other non-intrusive activities
- Observing and contemplating nature, including local flora and fauna, etc.

These reserves are also important as refuges for declining and threatened flora and fauna species at a time when land clearing is continuing to erode the remaining habitat for those and other species. In this respect, the reserves are important reservoirs of biodiversity that may provide a buffer as the effects of climate change take hold.

The CNP reserves are perhaps under-utilised as an educational resource and as refuges for people needing a break from their over-stressed lives, something that could be remedied by the providing clear and consistent signage (both regulatory and informational), improved infrastructure and by running publicity campaigns to attract more visitors. However, this must still be balanced against the needs of the reserves' fauna for undisturbed areas in which to breed and thrive.

The CNP reserves provide the people of Canberra and of Australia more generally with a valuable and iconic natural resource that needs to be protected and cherished. We hope that this inquiry will be instrumental in achieving those ends.

Yours sincerely,

John Brannan
Convenor, Friends of the Pinnacle