



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
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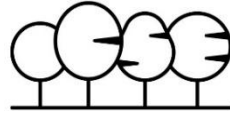
Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Environment Protection (Fossil Fuel Company Advertising) Amendment Bill 2024

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To whom it may concern,

Inquiry into Environment Protection (Fossil Fuel Company Advertising) Amendment Bill 2024

The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment is an independent statutory position established by the *Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993*. My Office embraces transformative change for an environmentally sustainable future and encourages sound environmental practices and procedures to be adopted by the Territory.

My Office strongly supports this Bill. Fossil fuel companies are disproportionately responsible for global emissions and are thus major contributors to climate change. Here in the ACT, much like the rest of Australia and across the world, we are *already* experiencing the devastating impacts of climate change through increasing periods of extreme heat and more frequent and intense events like flooding and bushfires.

Sport in a changing climate

Climate change presents real challenges to the community's ability to enjoy sport and active recreation. Amidst the severe bushfire smoke in Canberra during Black Summer, 74% of people in the ACT region were less active overall and 91% reported exercising less outdoors.¹ Sporting events across Australia are also regularly disrupted by extreme heat. The significant associated impacts on health and wellbeing, economics and sports participation are recognized nationally as well as here in the ACT.²

It is untenable that fossil fuel companies continue to benefit from Australian sport while simultaneously driving the climate crisis, which is putting sport at risk. Furthermore, it is disingenuous for governments to publicly recognise the need for urgent climate action while supporting the fossil fuel industry by permitting lucrative advertising opportunities.

Fossil fuel advertising has no place in a climate-conscious city.

Acting on the climate emergency

In 2019, the ACT joined many other jurisdictions to declare a state of climate emergency.

In 2021, the ACT signed the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, which includes a suggested action to stop fossil fuel advertising. The ACT Government has already banned fossil fuel advertising on buses and the light rail, demonstrating the necessity to remove harmful branding from our city. It is time this ban is extended to sporting venues and beyond.

Sponsorship choices are an outward display of an organisation's values. Allowing fossil fuel companies to profit from sporting events in Canberra is inconsistent with the ACT Government's commitment to being a future-focussed, climate-ready jurisdiction.

¹ Rodney R., Macleod E. and Calear A., 2023. *Human effects of the 2019-20 bushfire season on the community of the Australian Capital Territory*. Fenner School of Environment and Society and National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University.

² See Climate Council, 2021. *Game, Set, Match: Calling Time on Climate Inaction*. <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Game-Set-Match-Calling-Time-on-Climate-Inaction-Climate-Council-Sports-Report-1.pdf> and Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, 2019. *Heat, Humanity and the Hockey Stick: Climate Change and Sport in Canberra*. https://envcomm.act.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Issues-Paper_ClimateChange_Sport_OCSE_Sep2019.pdf.

Scope of the Bill

The Bill outlines that fossil fuel company advertising will only be prohibited in five sporting venues in the ACT. It is not made clear within the Bill or the Explanatory Statement why these specific venues were selected, or the rationale for limiting the Bill's scope in this way.

Recommendation 1: Expand the Bill's scope to cover all sporting venues in the ACT.

Looking ahead

Given the urgency of the climate crisis, the ACT Government's staggered approach to banning fossil fuel company advertising (first on public transport, now potentially in select sporting venues) is insufficient. Other jurisdictions like France and Amsterdam have taken a more wholesale approach and banned fossil fuel advertising outright. The ACT should do the same.

Recommendation 2: Ban all fossil fuel company advertising in the ACT.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sophie Lewis
Commissioner for Sustainability
and the Environment

4 March 2024