



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY  
Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Ed Cocks MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT's heritage arrangements

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## Standing Committee On Environment, Climate Change And Biodiversity

### Submission to the inquiry into the ACT's heritage arrangements.

We would like to submit our experiences with, and thoughts on, the ACT's heritage arrangements.

We purchased a heritage house located in the Wakefield Gardens Heritage district, built in 1936 and still in original condition. We lodged our plans to update and extend our home with the ACT Heritage Council in July 2022 and we are still waiting 8 months later for a decision.

In our experience, communication from the ACT Heritage Council has been poor. We have received numerous comments from our designer regarding communication, such as from November 2022:

*"I have chased yet again for I think about the twelfth time!!! I don't know what is going on in there but it is very frustrating!!!"*

In March 2023 our designer commented:

*"they do not answer their phone and they have an automated response to emails - its impossible. I think I have chased yours 3-4 times over the last month-6 weeks but unfortunately have nothing back"*

As a result we have been unable to engage a builder while we wait for communication to improve. This is extremely frustrating and expensive.

During the design process it was not possible for us to determine what trade-offs would be acceptable to the ACT Heritage Council. We wished to upgrade, modernise and extend our heritage home to achieve high levels of comfort and energy efficiency while also preserving features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the area. Our 1936 home is very deficient in both comfort and energy efficiency. The heritage rules and guidelines do not seem to recognise the importance of a comfortable, practical and efficient home, yet these are (or should be) essential.

The ACT Heritage Council should be required, as part of their mandate, to also consider comfort and efficiency when making a decision. If they do not then decisions will not reflect a healthy balance between the heritage and livability, appeals will be common, and dissatisfaction with the council will continue (and for good reason). We think that clear policies and guidelines should be set for the ACT Heritage Council to achieve these goals.

- Minimum criteria should be set for comfort and livability of all heritage homes. Heritage needs should not override these minimums.
- Examples of acceptable trade-offs should be established, as well as a process for considering the trade-offs in order to achieve a balanced outcome.
- All this information should be available on the ACT Heritage Council's web portal.

Kind regards

Mark and Beverley Francis