

11th November 2010

Hon Ms Meredith Hunter MLA
Chair,
Ecological Carrying Capacity Inquiry,
ACT Legislative Assembly

Re: SEE-Change and the Legislative Assembly inquiry into Ecological Carrying capacity of the ACT and region.

1. SEE-Change is a community-based organization that is committed to a reduction in the ecological footprint of the ACT. We seek to inform and provide opportunities to ACT residents to consider the implications of continuing our high ecological and carbon footprint activity. We warmly welcome the inquiry by the ACT assembly into these matters. Much of our work is premised on the evidence from studies of Canberra's ecological footprint that the current activities of Canberrans are having implications on the sustainability of territory way beyond our borders.

2. It is important in addressing its terms of reference that the committee recognizes that Canberra's future is intimately bound up with the future of the planet as a whole, and that humanity's ecological footprint now quite profoundly exceeds the capacity of the planet to renew and repair eco-system services. As world citizens with one of the highest ecological footprints in the world, Canberra must recognize our need to reduce the impact of our living and lifestyle on the environment not only here in Canberra but through our local decisions about consumption, elsewhere as well.

3. The ecological footprint is heavily influenced by carbon emissions. The commitment by the ACT government to a target that is about 60% lower than current emissions is a very positive step in the right direction. We need to ensure that we can meet that target and SEE-Change is strongly supporting it.

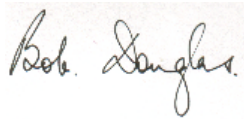
4. Through our 2020 Vision project, which we have recently discussed with Minister Corbell, we are planning to engage schoolchildren of all ages in a constructive consideration of the way life will change and need to change by the year 2020.

5. Throughout the Western world, there is a need to rethink what we understand as desirable development. The notion that economic growth

equals enhanced social well-being is quite false. Whatever growth it is contemplated for the ACT needs to be the kind of growth that is accompanied by a drastic reduction in our ecological footprint and greater local sustainability especially with respect to the production of food.

6. We urge the committee to embark on a monitoring program of Canberra's ecological footprint that enables residents and individuals to better understand the contribution that they can make to a sustainable future.

7. SEE-Change applauds the assembly on this inquiry and undertakes to give it maximal cooperation as the enquiry proceeds.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bob Douglas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Bob" is written in a slightly larger, more prominent script than the last name "Douglas". The signature is positioned on a light-colored, textured background.

Em Prof Bob Douglas AO
Chair SEE-Change Inc