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Inquiry name: Inquiry into Billboards
Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal

Name: Clare Lahiff

I wish to make a submission on the above inquiry. My submission is based on the strong belief that current regulations relating to billboard usage in the ACT need to be maintained and, in least in one case, strengthened.

Specifically I wish to address the following topics:

1. Aesthetics

- Thinking of the beauty of Canberra it is now brought home to me the extent to which this is enhanced by the absence of billboards. There is no doubt that billboards are inherently ugly and that massed advertising material is an offence to the aesthetic sense. One just needs to see the massed corflutes at election time (sorry guys!) to be convinced of this.



2. Danger and visual noise

- Advertising materials along roadways are potential sources of accidents. Motorists need to be attentive at all times to their driving and distractions need to be kept to an absolute minimum. Again using the election corflutes as an example I found myself in danger of distraction if I tried to read those along the roadway and in fact guarded against that. We are not allowed to read text messages while driving; we should not be allowed to read advertising material.
- Advertising materials can also impose dangers upon pedestrians – such as tripping on pavements or accidents resulting from distraction.
- I see visual noise as itself a danger to the psychological wellbeing of people. As well as interrupting the relative serenity of a natural or known built environment advertising material can create feelings of need and lack in people – this is in fact what it is designed to do. We do not want to increase levels of disquiet, feelings of neediness or acquisitiveness in our society.

3. Use of public space

- Public space should not be used for commercial gain. There are more important things than commerce and money, among them community and caring for others.

4. Bus advertising

- Wrap advertising in buses is a thing that has long disturbed me greatly. In my seventy years alive the transportation of people in opaque vehicles has always been associated with the most drastic measures taken against people – transportation of prisoners, smuggling of asylum seekers and, I must say it with tears in my eyes, the mass deportation of people to internment camps and ultimate death in the Second World War. I can think of nothing else when I see these wrapped buses. I know there are people inside but I can't see them. I do not know their state. I implore you to outlaw such wrappings on all vehicles used to transport human beings in Canberra.

In closing I must say that I love my city and the beauty of its nature, architecture and public spaces and the face it presents to visitors and those that work here to represent all Australians. I would hate to see all this sold out to commercial interests.