

[Redacted]



From: Tom Thomson [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, 20 June 2017, 1:20 PM
To: Committees [Redacted]
Subject: Billboard Inquiry

G'Day,

I am writing to you to express my feeling regarding unmitigated public advertising and to strongly discourage you from altering the ACT's current legislation or policy surrounding billboards.

Having lived in a number of other cities/countries I am always reminded of how well Canberra manages to be a modern and progressive city without descending into the chaos of a larger metropolis. I think we have mostly managed this by carefully controlling our public spaces and keeping a tight definition between what is publicly owned and what is privately owned. I think it would be to the detriment of the city if our public spaces were invaded for private benefit. It is important that you recognise that the visual aesthetic of the city is owned by everyone and it is not right that it should be destroyed for the commercial gain of the private sector.

There is a risk in intrusive private advertising. I am not a conservative and am liberally minded in my views of what people should be able to do in their own private lives. I am, however, aware that public viewpoints on what is or is not offensive swings back and forth. It is the case that advertising is a difficult market to regulate and that private companies are continuing to push the envelope of what is acceptable in order to maximise their advertising impact. I think how much the standard of what is acceptable on a billboard has changed in the 30 years of my life, let alone that of the older community. This fact was highlighted for me on the weekend while in Sydney when my 3 year old son asked "why is that lady naked" pointing to a billboard advertisement.

This is an issue of balancing what is appropriate for the privately owned domain and what is right for the publicly owned domain. I believe that the ACT has until now done a fantastic job of keeping that balance (though the bus shelter advertising was a step backwards) and I strongly urge you not to alter that balance and ruin the visual aesthetic of our city.

Cheers

Tom Thomson

A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE	
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