

The Secretary
Joint Committee on the National Capital & External Territories
Inquiry into the allocation of land to diplomatic missions in the ACT
Parliament House, Canberra

1 February 2013

SUBMISSION REGARDING PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF STIRLING PARK AS A DIPLOMATIC PRECINCT

Dear Committee Members,

I am a resident of Yarralumla and have lived there since 2007. I love the area and am very concerned about the proposed development of Stirling Park as a diplomatic precinct.

My submission is in relation to the second criteria in the Terms of Reference, namely to forecast levels of demand and supply.

Stirling Park is a beautiful piece of land that would be best suited to being included as part of the Canberra Nature Park. My partner and I often walked our dog there. It already has a nice amount of regenerating bush, and established trees, that provide habitat for native birds and animals, as well as providing leisure and exercise opportunities for the human population. Its location in central Canberra, by Lake Burley Griffin, gives it special heritage significance and it should be protected as open bushland. Canberra as a 'bush capital' needs bush, especially in important parts of the city, such as around the city's focal point, Lake Burley Griffin.

There is an abundance of research about the importance of green space to the health of city residents. At this time a lot of unfortunate development is occurring in Canberra. The beauty and live-ability of the city seems to be being forgotten in badly considered development decisions. The current proposal that Stirling Park should be developed as a diplomatic precinct is an excellent example of bad development decision-making that puts the demands of an itinerant, diplomatic population above those of Canberra's (and Australia's) long-term residents.

In relation to supply of land I believe there is appropriate land that has been set aside for a diplomatic precinct in Deakin West that does not have the obvious heritage and environmental values that Stirling Park has. In my submission, if in fact there is insufficient land already granted for this purpose, there is also plenty of available land in Canberra without the heritage and special values of Stirling Park. Considering that there is suitable land available elsewhere, and also considering the precious nature of Stirling Park, it seems completely inappropriate not to protect it for the benefit of all Australians-present and future. Importantly, once infrastructure has been built on Stirling Park, it is

inevitable that the entire area will be developed over time and what is currently a special park within the city will be lost forever.

It is crucial that important decisions such as this one currently before this committee properly consider exactly what will be removed from future generations once the decision has been made. This is a critical juncture in relation to Stirling Park and I suggest that building a diplomatic precinct there is a completely improper use of rare land when other land is readily available for supply and would involve a gross failure to properly consider what most Australians would prefer if given the chance to understand the issues.

In conclusion I ask the Committee to please act in the best interests of the people of Canberra, and all Australians, by recommending the protection of Stirling Park from inappropriate development as a diplomatic precinct. The park is too valuable as open bushland in central Canberra- available to all- to be developed.

Yours sincerely,

Joanna Bowan

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