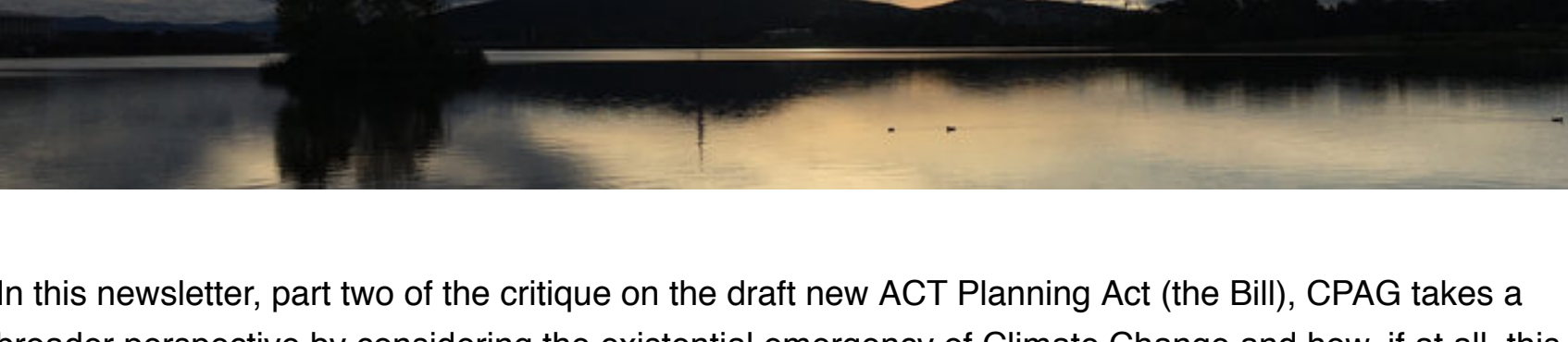


CPAG newsletter 05/22

Focus: ACT Planning Review — a broader perspective



In this newsletter, part two of the critique on the draft new ACT Planning Act (the Bill), CPAG takes a broader perspective by considering the existential emergency of Climate Change and how, if at all, this is reflected in the draft new Planning Bill. We have four new articles: three are looking at the draft new Planning Bill from the perspective of climate change and sustainability, the fourth provides a historical perspective on the contested space that is Canberra Planning.

Our references for doing so are the Planning Institute of Australia's *2021 Climate Series* papers, the 2022 World Economic Forum's report titled *BiodiverCities by 2030*, and the government's own *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-2025*, plus a presentation given by Nicholas Brown at a recent CPAG forum.

The Planning Act plays a foundational role in producing a more sustainable planning system that meets the needs of people without putting unsustainable pressures on the natural resources on which we depend, and that includes mitigating our contributions to climate change. To not put climate change front and centre of a new Planning Bill is to wilfully ignore contemporary best practices and the Government's own calls for action.

CITIES' RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

Our key article for this newsletter is a review of the *BiodiverCities by 2030* Report. The message is clear: unless we stop our cities being in conflict with nature we will lose livability. The time to act is now.

Cities are the engine of the global economy - contributing 80% of the world's GDP — but their exponential growth in recent decades has come at the expense of nature. The built environment has grown by two-thirds in the first 12 years of the 21st century, leading to the degradation of local ecosystems and the loss of habitats. Urban areas are also responsible for over 75% of global carbon emissions, accelerating climate change which drives further nature loss.

The Canberra Times of 26th February reported the imminent release of a draft new ACT Planning Act for public comment, and that "developers would be given greater flexibility under the new Act."

The question arises as to whether this increased flexibility in a new Planning Act is a good thing for the ACT community. How might the proposed new Planning Act be assessed by the ACT community?

One template which might assist is a January 2022 report by the World Economic Forum entitled: ***BiodiverCities by 2030: Transforming Cities' Relationship with Nature.***

The World Economic forum is a non-profit organisation, works with various stakeholders globally, and has standing with the UN. This report demonstrates that cities (around the world) are destroying native habitat and leading to biodiversity loss and increasingly contribute to climate change. The report identifies principles to underpin future directions reversing these trends for those in power.

In its first newsletter CPAG produced an article highly critical of so-called public consultation processes especially around planning and development issues. In this context and given ACT citizens are to be offered another 'opportunity' to comment upon a new and dramatically changed Planning Act, reviewing the World Economic Forum report provides one way to properly judge this new ACT Planning Act.

[READ THE ARTICLE HERE](#)

[BIODIVERCITIES BY 2030 REPORT](#)

THE ACT DRAFT PLANNING BILL – AN ABERRATION

In this article, Albert Oberdorf (former Director, ACT Private Enterprise Land Development Strategy) runs a diagnostic over the proposed new Planning Bill to see if there is any meaningful integration with the government's own Climate Change Strategy and in doing so finds the increased concentration of decision-making power given to the executive to be undesirable and incompatible with any ambitions on climate change and sustainability.



He concludes that the draft ACT Planning Bill is so retrogressive that it needs to be withdrawn and the ACT Government appoint an independent body to review the ACT planning processes and come up with an improved process that includes the necessary checks and balances.

[READ ALBERT'S ARTICLE HERE](#)

PLANNING AND CLIMATE CHANGE: TACKLING THE BIG ISSUES NOW

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) is Australia's national body "representing planning and the planning profession". In 2021 the PIA published an update to its policy position along with two discussion papers, part of its *Climate Series* that aims to address the role of planning in adapting to climate change.



Richard Johnston, life fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia, has examined the draft new ACT Planning Act and has written about it before, addressing the dry stuff, the operational, the nuts-and-bolts of the draft new bill — an found it wanting — but here he is looking at the big picture issue of Climate Change through the lens of what the PIA has stated. It should be noted that the ACT Government claims the PIA was 'consulted' yet, as this analysis reveals, there's nothing of substance in the draft new Planning Bill on how to deal with climate change and sustainability other than a few rather unhelpful motherhood statements.

[READ RICHARD'S ANALYSIS](#)

[PIA CLIMATE SERIES PAPERS](#)

A HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR PLANNING IN CANBERRA

In his presentation at a recent CPAG Forum — dedicated entirely to the discussion of the draft new ACT Planning Act — Nicholas Brown, author of *A History of Canberra*, set the historical context for the proposed new Planning Bill. Nick made some very interesting points on the historical aspects of planning for Canberra, such as the deliberate stratification of society, the fractured community Canberra always was, the benefits of authoritarian planning, and the more recent paradoxes that are besetting Canberra.



[NICK'S PRESENTATION NOTES](#)

Do you write about Canberra Planning?



Have you or your group conducted your own enquiry into the draft new ACT Planning Act? We're interested to hear from you about the issues as you see them in the proposed new ACT Planning Bill.

In this way our hope is that, together with you, CPAG can collectively create an informed and ambitious forum that makes meaningful contributions to the planning system reform.

Get in touch and join other writers via the email address below or the contact page on the CPAG website.

And please forward this newsletter to anyone interested in planning in our city of Canberra, the National Capital.

[Get in Touch](#)

What have we been up to?

In addition to holding several well-attended discussion forums both on-line and in gatherings at various venues, CPAG has been collaborating with various expert writers on producing assessments of the proposed new ACT Planning Act. CPAG has also been active on writing submissions and writing to ministers directly, expressing our collective concern with the deeply flawed draft ACT Planning Bill. CPAG also reiterates our call for the following two most basic requests:

1. **An extension of the public consultation period of at least six months;**
2. **That the whole New Planning System be presented, including the Territory Plan and the District Plans, so that a proper assessment can be made of how the new planning system is to work.**

Canberra Planning Action Group

CPAG is a volunteer community group, formed early in 2019, in response to widespread and growing discontent by community groups and individuals with the ACT planning and approvals processes. By addressing the underlying drivers of the ACT Planning System, CPAG seeks to inform and create a united community voice for all those who want a more inclusive, socially just and ecologically sensitive approach to planning for Canberra.

[Find Out More](#)

You are receiving this email from the Canberra Planning Action Group (CPAG), as in the past you have indicated your interest in being included - if this has changed, please let us know or unsubscribe via the link below.

cpagact@gmail.com CPAG Website →

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