



## Petition

Registration No.	9
Title	Repeal or amend Katherine East Area Plan to remove the retail component; revitalise the town centre; and undertake a review into independency and capacity of the Planning Commission
Presented on	11 August 2021
Presented by	Member for Katherine
Referred to	Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
Date referred	11 August 2021
Response due	2 December 2021
Response received	12 October 2021
Response presented	26 October 2021

### Petition

**To the Speaker and the Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory**

#### **WE THE UNDERSIGNED RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH**

We the undersigned comprise of:

- a) Business owners and investors
- b) Members of the community who work in the town centre and/or would like to see the Town Centre succeed.

We are of the view that the Katherine East Area Plan will have a significant and ongoing detrimental impact on the economic viability and vitality of town centre. It will damage the local economy to the detriment of jobs. There is available land in the town centre. Katherine Town Centre is already struggling and commercial development at Katherine East will pull spending and investment away from the town centre.

The Plan making process failed to engage and consult the business community on the impact of the proposal and we have no faith that that the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics (including the Planning Commission) is capable of delivering a plan which includes 8000m' of retail floorspace without damaging the town centre.

The Planning Commission, has failed in its role, as an independent statutory authority:

- to ensure community engagement and consultation was fit for purpose
- to review the accuracy, strength and suitability of the evidence base (which does not demonstrate a need for the proposed amount of floorspace).
- to properly assess the economic and social impacts of the out of centre retail development on the established town centre.
- to place the risk of flooding in a national context. The risk of flooding is not a reason to neglect and damage the town centre.
- to ensure its work is independent from the Department (it engages Departmental staff and management to do its work).

## **YOUR PETITIONERS THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAY THAT**

The Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory recommends:

- that the Katherine East Area Plan be repealed or amended to remove the retail component.
- that an Area Plan is undertaken, with complete and proper community consultation and engagement, for the revitalisation of the town centre to support local business and the economy so as to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- That it undertakes a review into the independence and capacity of the Planning Commission.

## **Response**

The Katherine East Area Plan was prepared in the broader context of the Katherine Land Use Plan, which identifies Katherine East for urban residential growth on land that is not flood affected.

Consultation on the Katherine East Area Plan was undertaken by the Northern Territory Planning Commission in two stages through 2018 and 2019. Community consultation included a combination of pop up stalls, information sessions and workshops, information on the Planning Commission website, mail out and hand out flyers to shops, various media releases, advertisements and the establishment of a Community Advisory Group coordinated by Katherine Town Council. Comments received from stakeholders, including the Community Advisory Group, informed the preparation of the Area Plan.

The proposal to incorporate the Katherine East Area Plan into the NT Planning Scheme was then subject to a third stage of public consultation through formal public exhibition for a period of 28 days from 22 January, 2020 to 21 February, 2020 in accordance with the *Planning Act 1999*. No submissions objecting to the proposal were received and the Katherine East Area Plan came into effect as a policy document of the NT Planning Scheme by virtue of a notice in the Katherine Times on 13 May, 2020.

The Area Plan provides for residential land release across two neighbourhoods with higher density centres surrounded by lower density residential areas.

The intention of the Area Plan is to accommodate future growth of the commercial and retail sectors in balance with the continued economic role of Katherine Terrace and the central business area.

The Area Plan sets a limit on the amount of retail floor space to comfortably accommodate near-term demand, including full-line supermarket, without undermining the commercial viability of Katherine Town Centre or the future commercial centre of the second neighbourhood centre in Katherine East.

I commend the NT Planning Commission for carrying out this work, and can see no reason to suspend or alter the framework for the delivery of land for the development of a neighbourhood centre in Katherine East.

Furthermore, the Department of the Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics will continue to work with the Katherine Town Council to support its efforts to revitalise the Katherine Town Centre.