

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

NOTICE OF MOTION

LAURA NUTTALL: I give notice that I shall move – That this Assembly:

1. Notes:

- a) Richardson shops has been left derelict since May 2019 and the last tenant vacated in 2022;
- b) Two petitions have previously been tabled in the Assembly collectively garnering 1205 signatures—by Ms Lawder in November 2022, and in May 2024 by Ms Burch with Principal Petitioner and now Member Ms Tough;
- c) Despite two petitions, the shops have remained vacant contrary to significant community interest and current government policy settings;
- d) Under Schedule 4 (10) of the Planning Act 2023, failing to use land for a continuous period of at least 1 year for the purpose for which the lease over the land is granted constitutes an offence.

2. Further notes:

- a) A survey undertaken by the office of Miss Nuttall with 203 respondents from the area found that 95% of respondents favoured the shops being redeveloped;
- b) The following percentage of respondents favoured the following uses for the site:
 - i. 82%: commercial property
 - ii. 38%: community group centres
 - iii. 37%: community services
 - iv. 35%: shop-top housing

3. Calls on the ACT Government to:

- a) Negotiate with the owner to ensure appropriate use of the Richardson Shops site aligned with community desires by 31st December 2025;
- b) Investigate why the shops were left empty for 3 years and how similar situations could be avoided;

- c) Review the process for offering crown leases and consider whether it be mandatory to include a withdrawal clause to safeguard against properties left vacant for a year or more;
 - d) Investigate policy changes to effectively disincentivise leaving commercial properties vacant contrary to community interest, such as:
 - i. Stronger enforcement of existing compliance mechanisms (such as Schedule 4(10) of the *Planning Act 2023*);
 - ii. An additional levy on vacant retail properties;
 - iii. Provision to add withdrawal clauses to Crown Leases should they be left vacant for more than 1 year;
 - iv. Provision of subsidised community space;
 - v. Other changes to the Planning Act to disincentivise shop squatting;
 - e) By the last sitting week of 2025 and quarterly thereafter until a tenant has been found provide a report to the Assembly on the following elements:
 - i. Identify which policy changes have been implemented and provide timelines for policy changes which are intended to take place;
 - ii. Verify whether Richardson Shops has—or will shortly have—a tenant that meets community need;
 - iii. If a tenant has not been found, take action to enforce compliance with Schedule 4 (10) of the Planning Act 2023.
4. Calls on the owners of the Richardson Shops site to:
- a) Proactively and constructively engage with the local Richardson community on the community need for the Richardson Shops site;
 - b) Work collaboratively with the ACT Government to find a solution that prioritises the Richardson community's vision for the site;
 - c) Comply with Schedule 4 (10) of the Planning Act 2023 and arrange for the site to be used in line with the lease purpose clause and community expectations as soon as possible but by no later than 31st December 2025.

Laura Nuttall
23rd June 2025