

Diplomatic enclave

1. Can you please provide an update on the status of development of unused diplomatic land in Yarralumla, O'Malley and Deakin?

a. How many builds have been approved since the last hearing?

NCA Response:

Since the JSC Hearing in November 2015, the NCA has issued one works approvals being for the Iranian Embassy in Yarralumla. Approval was granted on 13 November 2015.

b. How many blocks are still undeveloped?

NCA Response:

Yarralumla:

Two leased blocks are undeveloped. Block 18 Section 86 Yarralumla and Block 6 Section 83 Yarralumla are leased to Bangladesh and Iran respectively and are currently undeveloped. Both countries are developing building plans for these sites.

Two vacant blocks in Yarralumla are unleased but have environmental values which prevent their development.

Deakin:

There are a total of nine unleased blocks in Deakin. Of these the NCA is currently in discussion regarding the leasing of six of these. Of the remaining three sites, development of one is restricted due to environmental concerns, the remaining two sites are available.

O'Malley

There are two unleased blocks available in the developable diplomatic land in O'Malley. The NCA manages another parcel of land that has environmental values and land constraints to diplomatic use (steep).

Two of the leased blocks (Kuwait and Laos) are currently undeveloped. See answer to 1c below.

c. What is the status of negotiations on the development of each of these blocks?

Deakin

Vietnam: Block 10 Section 80 Deakin. A draft Crown Lease has been sent to the Government of Vietnam on 23 March 2016. A letter of acceptance was received from the Ambassador on 2 August 2016. The NCA is currently waiting on confirmation from Vietnam of a date to sign the lease.
Czech Republic: Block 7 Section 80 Deakin. The Czech Republic have submitted a works approval application for construction of an Embassy building on the block. An extension of time for construction to commence has been granted to 1 July 2018.

O'Malley

Kuwait: Block 31 Section 5 O'Malley. The Kuwait government are currently developing their plans for the site.

Laos: Block 29 Section 5 O'Malley. The Lao Government are in discussions with the NCA about lodgement of an amended works approval application for the site. An extension letter for commencement of construction has been granted to 1 July 2017.

Yarralumla

Blocks 18 and Block 20 Section 86 Yarralumla leased to Bangladesh and India respectively are subject to a current EPBC Referral to the Department of Environment and Energy.

Iran – Block 6 Section 83 Yarralumla. The NCA granted Iran an extension of time to commence construction of their embassy. Works Approval granted on 15 November 2015.

Russia: Block 26 Section 44 Yarralumla. The NCA granted Russia works approval for the development of the Embassy site on 31 March 2011. Work has commenced on site.

- 2. I have received complaints from residents in O'Malley about the lack of car parks for diplomatic missions, and the encroachment of employee cars on the street.**
- a. What requirements are in place for diplomatic missions to provide off street parking for their employees in Yarralumla, O'Malley, Deakin and elsewhere?**

NCA Response:

The NCA requires for all new leases that all car parking for Embassy staff and visitors is accommodated wholly within the site.

- b. Has the NCA received any complaints on this issue? If so, about which streets and missions?**

NCA Response:

The NCA has not received any recent complaints about parking in O'Malley. Parking management is undertaken by the ACT Government.

- c. Does the NCA have any guidelines on this issue?**

NCA Response:

The NCA requires for all new leases that that all car parking for Embassy staff and visitors is accommodated wholly within the site. The determination of the required number car parks is made following discussions with the proponent and following consideration of the office areas within a building.

If not, will the NCA consider developing guidelines on this issue?

NCA Response:

Car parking provisions are incorporated into the lease for each site

- 3. Amenity in the Parliamentary Triangle**
- a. Can you please provide an update on the development of amenity in the Parliamentary Triangle?**

NCA response:

Amendment 86 to the National Capital Plan incorporated changes to land use provisions for East and West Block, Anzac Park East and West. These changes include the opportunity for commercial office space, hotel and function centre. The changes were made to encourage property owners develop a wider range of activities and improve amenity in these locations

4. ANZAC Park East and West

What has been the NCA's involvement on this development?

- What is the NCA's view on the development?
- Are you aware of any plans for community consultation on this development?
- What planning restrictions exist in this area?

NCA Response:

The NCA proposed changes to the land use and building height provisions as part of the public consultation for Amendment 86 to the National Capital Plan. The planning provisions proposed by the NCA as part of Draft Amendment 86 were incorporated into the final document approved by the former Minister for Territories in May 2016 and tabled in Parliament in August 2016. New development on the site will be subject to community consultation.

These sites are in a Designated Area and therefore are subject to planning approval by the National Capital Authority. The planning provisions for these sites are based on those already in place for much of Constitution Avenue. These provide for a mixed-use precinct permitting office, residential and commercial development.

Does the NCA have the final say and approval on what can and cannot be built in this area?

NCA Response:

Yes

5. CSIRO Ginninderra

- Can you provide an update on the reclassification of land and proposed development at the CSIRO Ginninderra field station?

NCA Response:

The NCA proposed that land at CSIRO Ginninderra be classified as Urban Land as part of the public consultation for Draft Amendment 86 to the National Capital Plan. Draft Amendment 86 was approved by the former Minister in May 2016 and tabled in Parliament in August 2016.

The timing of the development of this land is a matter for the CSIRO.

6. Lake Burley Griffin Water Quality

- a. Can you please provide an update on the general health of Lake Burley Griffin and any water quality issues?

NCA Response:

Environmental Health of Lake Burley Griffin

A 2015 consultant report prepared for the NCA that analysed 34 years of continuous lake monitoring data was produced by Atech Group and ALS. The report found that the water quality of Lake Burley Griffin (LBG) and the overall environmental health of the Lake has improved during this period.

The analysis showed:

- An overall reduction in turbidity, suspended solids, phosphorus and ortho-phosphate with levels generally below *Lake Burley Griffin Water Quality Management Plan 2011* (LBG WQMP) benchmark levels;
- Conductivity, Ammonia and Total Nitrogen were all generally below LBG WQMP benchmark levels;
- pH values were almost always within the LBG WQMP benchmark values of 6.5 and 8.5;
- Total nitrogen/total phosphorus ratio has increased in West Lake;
- Confirmation that natural forces (strong winds and Lake inflows) strongly influence lake water quality; and
- Confirmation that improvements to catchment management practices have contributed to better in Lake water quality.

Recreational Water Quality

The ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality (ACT Health, 2014) are used to assess the water quality in regards to recreational use. The presence of blue green algae and bacteria (*Enterococci*) are the key factors when determining the suitability of water quality for recreational use.

The 2015-2016 season saw LBG open without warnings for 96% of the period. It was closed to primary contact (swimming) as a result of elevated blue green algae for 1% of the season, and closed to primary contact due to *Enterococci* for 3% of the season.

Issues for Water Quality

Water quality within any lake, creek, pond or wetland is largely impacted by the water which flows from its catchment. Soils, rubbish, pollutants, and nutrients from leaf litter and garden clippings are all carried into the stormwater network which connects the waterways and adversely effects water quality. Heavy rainfall often has an adverse effect on water quality flushing contaminants and pollution into the Lake.

The NCA has been contributing to the ACT and Region Coordination Group, an inter-jurisdictional coordinating committee made up of the relevant Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Government agencies and representative community group leaders. The initial outcome was the preparation of the *ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy 2016-46*. The Strategy establishes a 30 year vision for the Upper Murrumbidgee and Molonglo Catchments by implementing a pragmatic and achievable set of policy initiatives.

7. Amendment 86 – revised National Capital Plan

- What were the key community concerns raised in the consultation process, and how were they addressed in the final plan?

NCA Response:

The NCA released a consultation draft of the revised National Capital Plan. Many matters of community concerns were raised during this process and addressed in the final Amendment. Key issues that remained were:

1. *Removal of special requirements from river corridors*
2. *Expansion of future urban areas to include land to the west of the Tuggeranong town centre*
3. *The change in land use for the CSIRO Ginninderra field station site, from Hills, Ridges and Buffer Spaces to Urban Areas*

4. *Redevelopment of the Anzac Park East and West sites, including a proposed increase in permitted building height*
5. *A change in permitted land uses and potential built form for Block 10 Section 13 Forrest*

These changes were made to streamline planning in the ACT without compromising environmental values or the Commonwealth's interest in national capital. To address community concerns the revised Plan requires that the ACT Government is required to consult with the NCA prior to undertaking planning change so as to ensure that the Commonwealth interest is protected (Items 1 and 2). For items 3, 4, & 5, detailed planning and approvals will be the responsibility of the NCA and subject public consultation.

- Are there any outstanding areas of community concern?

NCA Response:

The change in land use and potential built form for Block 10 Section 13 Forrest remains of concern to some sections of the community.

8. Inner-south and inner-north suburbs

- Can you please provide a map of the NCA footprint in the residential suburbs of the inner south and inner north?
 - What NCA controls are in place for developments in these areas?
 - What qualities are you looking for in the developments in these areas?
 - When will your review of the controls be finalised and publicly released?

NCA Response:

A map is attached indicating the Designated Areas in the inner-south of Canberra.

A final date for the release of the proposed planning amendments is yet to be established.

9. Pay parking

a. What feedback have you received from the national institutions about the impact of paid parking on tourist numbers and experiences?

NCA Response:

Prior to the introduction of pay parking in October 2014 car park occupancy was close to 100% with some car parks exceeding line marked capacity on a regular basis. The primary policy goal for the introduction of pay parking, was to provide for visitors parking at the cultural institutions. Occupancy numbers indicate that this goal is being met and parking availability is no longer a barrier to visitation as it was prior to Scheme's introduction.

The NCA has sought and received feedback from a number of the cultural institutions. The National Gallery of Australia (NGA), Museum of Australian Democracy, National Archives of Australia, and Questacon reported complaints due to a lack of parking prior to the introduction of pay parking and noted that they had experienced improvements in visitor accessibility since the introduction.

It should be noted that the NGA, rather than the NCA operates both car parks on its land. The NGA has noted that it experienced a drop of 10% in visitation and an impact on commercial revenue, in the first year of pay parking, acknowledging that this may have also coincided with general trading conditions and exhibitions schedules. The NGA has received complaints from its patrons about having to pay for parking.

In addition the National Library of Australia advised in the first year of operation they experienced a 15% decline in use of the collection materials which they believe is attributed to pay parking.

b. Has the increase in paid parking created any issues, such as displacement of cars into surrounding residential areas?

NCA response:

The NCA worked with the ACT Government prior to the introduction of pay parking to identify surrounding streets, the majority of which are managed by the ACT Government, requiring additional on-street parking signage restrictions. As the ACT Government manage the majority of the surrounding roads, the question would be best directed to them.

10. Floriade

- Can you please comment on the long-term viability of hosting Floriade in Commonwealth Park?
- Is it the NCA's view that Floriade should stay in Commonwealth Park?
- Can you please comment on this year's Floriade, specifically whether the increased use of temporary planting beds was deemed successful?

NCA response:

The NCA worked with the ACT Government in the development of Floriade 2016 as an interim arrangement in Commonwealth Park to monitor the impact of the event. This arrangement had a considerably reduced footprint for in-ground plantings and increased the tree protection zone. The event was successfully held 17 September to 16 October 2016.

The feedback from the ACT Government was that it was a successful event including the use of the mobile planters and they will work on enhancing this arrangement for Floriade 2017 planned for Commonwealth Park. The NCA and ACT Government are in discussions around the longer term use of Commonwealth Park for Floriade.

11. Parliament House security upgrade

- There are significant community concerns about the proposed security upgrades to Parliament House. At the last hearing, the NCA said it had final approval of any upgrades. On what grounds would you reject the upgrades?

NCA response:

The NCA requires that proponents for any project develop designs of an appropriate quality, consult with affected stakeholders and consider heritage values. These principles were applied to the security upgrade of Parliament House.

- Are you aware of contingencies to allow for adding more capacity to the building?

NCA response:

The NCA is aware that Parliament House was designed with capacity for expansion. Details of any projects regarding future expansion should be referred to the Department of Parliamentary Services.

12. The Lobby restaurant

- Can you please provide an update on the lease and upgrade negotiations with The Lobby restaurant?

NCA response:

The licensee of the Lobby requested an early release from the licence agreement for the property. The NCA will take the premises back on 15 February 2017. The NCA has commenced planning to assess the buildings condition and examine options for its future.