

**From:** Jack  
**To:** [Committee, NCET \(REPS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Canberra Light Rail, Civic to Woden  
**Date:** Thursday, 17 May 2018 12:21:25 PM

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Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and  
External Territories  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**SUBMISSION.** Please read with reference to Google or similar satellite images of the subject areas.

## **Inquiry into Commonwealth and Parliamentary approvals for the proposed Stage 2 of the Australian Capital Territory light rail project - Civic to Woden**

**The crossing of Lake Burley Griffin,  
and the subject light rail's  
involvement with the Parliamentary  
Zone - a proposal for a more  
innovative and respectful plan, with  
resultant wider connectivity and  
developmental opportunities, while  
preserving the important character of**

**Commonwealth Avenue, its bridge, and the Parliamentary Zone; and avoiding the need for costly overhead-wire-free trams, apparently required in the Central National Area.**

If Canberra's light rail system is to continue south from Civic across Lake Burley Griffin, or in any case, we should look to Griffin's missing third central lake crossing. It is enduringly depicted in various iterations of his plans, springing from the southwest neck of Acton Peninsula, and connecting in a graceful circular curve to south side land that is now the very popular Lennox Gardens.

Use of an updated version of that crossing could avoid light rail's expensive intrusion on the important and formalised Commonwealth Avenue/Bridge domain, and on the

heritage value of the Parliamentary Zone generally.

And it would enable the improved and beneficial two-way connection of London Circuit and Edinburgh Avenue in Civic, and Lawson Crescent as it passes through the important Acton precinct containing: New Acton; part of the Australian National University; Old Canberra House; the ANU's international sculpture garden; West Basin's western shores revealing the important Water Axis; the National Museum of Australia; the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies; and an important pre- and post-ACT heritage and cultural-landscape precinct on and around historic Lennox Crossing Road, and on to popular south side Lennox Gardens, and beyond.

As well, the expensive and difficult currently proposed transfer of light rail tracks from London Circuit South up to Commonwealth Avenue would be avoided.

The current somewhat "knee-jerk" and self-conscious plan to integrate light rail into Commonwealth Avenue and its bridge, is intrusive, disruptive, and destructive of the important existing ambience. It is potentially expensive, if only because overhead wires are apparently banned on the bridge and on into the Parliamentary Zone, requiring costly modifications to the rolling stock for the whole Civic-Woden route.

Traffic lanes on the bridge could be lost, causing inconvenience and delays, and a new railway inserted between the two existing twin bridges/carriageways would be very expensive, disruptive,

unsightly, and out-of-kilter with the matching Kings Avenue Bridge.

Tram cars in their somewhat naff saturated-red livery, and their trackside paraphernalia, on time-honoured Commonwealth Avenue would be out of place, and would destroy the vital symmetry with Kings Avenue, especially as seen from Capital Hill.

Similarly, those trams on historical King Edward Terrace, especially where it crosses the Land Axis, and in other parts of the Parliamentary Zone, as currently proposed, could have a similar disrespectful and outlandish impact.

Reflecting Griffin, and not ruled out in the NCA's comprehensive strategic plan *The Griffin Legacy*, the above suggested new lake crossing would spring from that part of Lawson Crescent on Acton Peninsula's lower southwest shore (not

off the point, as Griffin knew, so as to preserve the peninsula's distinctive land form).

It would make southern landfall into a low-speed “shared zone” section of carriageway (enabling the safe coexistence of trams, pedestrians, bikes, and cars) extending via the shortest route across a narrow part of an enlarged Lennox Gardens, to Flynn Drive.

Desirably, the Gardens would be sensitively expanded north and west, approximating Griffin's planned land form shape there (and completing his symmetry with matching Bowen Place, Barton), achieved by incremental lake reclamation. The popular Gardens could increase in area by about 50%.

The above proposed, new, low-profile (so as not to compete visually with

Commonwealth Avenue Bridge), crossing could visually tolerate overhead light rail wires, by virtue of its modernity and detachment.

It would precipitate much needed all-mode (excluding trucks) connectivity between Civic, New Acton, the ANU, Acton Peninsula, the National Museum and The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies there, Lotus Bay with its popular yacht club, an expanded and augmented (see below) Lennox Gardens precinct, Parkes, the Parliamentary Zone, Barton, and beyond, with new national capital and territory development opportunities en route.

This fits with the National Capital Authority's recent draft structure plan for the Acton Peninsula-ANU areas in particular (please refer to the author's

submission to the NCA on this, in which various suggested new and exciting development typologies are put forward.)

Of course, pedestrians and bikes could use the new bridge, protected from cross winds, with even the inclusion of a cafe near mid span.

The long-standing triangular yachting course in sublime West Lake would be preserved, as would be east-west watercraft access to and from West and Central Basins. If absolutely necessary, a tilt-up opening section in the bridge, or similar, could allow craft with tall masts to pass through, to a restricted and strict timetable.

Two-way light rail could proceed south on Flynn Drive to State Circle, then continue east on the Circle to a tram stop, at grade, at the junction with the



conveniently located head of Kings Avenue, for easy pedestrian or bike access to Parliament House, the Parliamentary Zone, Parkes, and Barton.

The tracks could continue on around State Circle, with more stops further serving Barton, then across to Capital Circle serving Parliament House South; to Adelaide Avenue, and on to Woden.

Light rail overhead wires could be tolerated on that route, because: Flynn Drive is outside the Parliamentary Zone; the section of State Circle between Flynn Drive and Kings Avenue is mostly in a cutting; and the rest of State Circle, and Capital Circle South are largely shielded from Parliament House by landscaping.

Concerns about overhead wires near The Lodge on Adelaide Avenue could be eventually unfounded, because of the

laudable long-standing plan to locate the residence in Stirling Park, Yarralumla, in a brilliant Australian sylvan setting, with lake views to the north.

(A proposal to locate the Prime Minister's residence on Attunga Point, right on the lake, west of the yacht club, is undesirable because no residential development, especially one that prevents public access to the foreshores, should be permitted in that area - in any case, it would be seen as very elitist in the national capital, inappropriately aping the PM's Sydney residence, Kirribilli House, all contrary to Australian egalitarian values.)

The new bridge, and recreational facilities on expanded Lennox Gardens North, including say, more parkland, trees, a fine Ferris wheel, an aquatic centre, bike hire centre, pavilions, food

outlets, car parking, etc, even utilising the land of Flynn Drive's northern "clover-leaf", would be appropriately outside the National Triangle, but certainly *of* it.

A site or two could be available for say, a quasi national institution, or even an hotel. The world-class installations could be redolent of the nearby colourful post-modernist structures of the National Museum, and, of course, they would be served by very convenient light rail.

Notably, the new precinct would provide an excellent much needed, and more accessible, visible, and legible location for Floriade, replacing the troubled one in Commonwealth Park.

Because of its new connectivity with Civic (and Parkes), the expanded Lennox Gardens precinct would become

a complementary "City-to-the-Lake" experience. It would offer a sunnier, more "national-capital" setting than the current south facing, very expensive (especially with the proposed vertical duplication of Parkes Way and associated works [which need not proceed]), and sad apartment-compromised West-Basin version.

And the proposed controversial and expensive lake reclamation at West Basin could be abandoned.

The above new lake crossing, Lennox Gardens expansion, and associated alternative light rail route are recommended to the Committee for inclusion into the proposed Stage 2 of the ACT light rail project, and related programmes.

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May 17 2018

## Post scripts.

1. Irrespective of whether or not Stage 2 of the light rail programme proceeds, the above-described third central lake crossing is considered worthy of implementation for the enhanced connectivity and development opportunities it provides.

2. Incorporating light rail into Commonwealth Avenue Bridge is surely an intractable problem, and is in any case, undesirable. However, if the ACT Government's published preferred light rail route through the Parliamentary Zone and Barton, and on to Woden, is acceptable to the Federal Parliament (provided the Commonwealth and the ACT are prepared to pay for the special overhead-wires-free trams, and possibly other special related infrastructure items), then the above proposal for an alternative lake crossing should be adopted, with the rail line making its way

from Lennox Gardens to King Edward  
Terrace via the existing loop road passing  
under the approaches to the Commonwealth  
Avenue Bridge.

JK