



**Australian Government**  
**National Capital Authority**

**Submission No. 4**

File No: 13/391  
Our Ref: 146626

Senator Louise Pratt  
Committee Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on the  
National Capital and External Territories  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Pratt,

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF AMENITY  
WITHIN THE PARLIAMENTARY TRIANGLE**

Enclosed is a submission prepared by the National Capital Authority (NCA) for consideration as part of the above Inquiry.

If it assists the Inquiry, the NCA would be pleased to appear before the Committee in a public hearing.

If there are any other matters the Committee would like covered in a written briefing, please ask your Secretariat to contact me and I will ensure a supplementary submission is prepared.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Rake', written over a large, stylized flourish.

Gary Rake  
Chief Executive

3 June 2013

*Building the National Capital in the hearts of all Australians*

T 02 6271 2888 | F 02 6273 4427 | [www.nationalcapital.gov.au](http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au) | email [natcap@natcap.gov.au](mailto:natcap@natcap.gov.au)

Couriers & deliveries: Treasury Building, King Edward Terrace, Parkes ACT 2600 | Mailing: GPO Box 373 Canberra ACT 2601

ABN 75 149 374 427

# **NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY - PUBLIC SUBMISSION**

## **Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories**

### **Inquiry into provision of amenity within the Parliamentary Triangle**

#### **The role of the National Capital Authority**

1. The National Capital Authority (NCA) manages the Australian Government's continuing interest in Canberra as the National Capital.
2. The National Capital and Seat of Government is the legislative, judicial, administrative, executive, ceremonial and symbolic centre of the nation.

#### **Planning in the Central National Area**

3. The Central National Area, which includes the Parliamentary Zone and its setting and the main diplomatic sites and national institutions, is the heart of the National Capital.
4. The NCA has direct responsibility for all aspects of planning and development approval in the Central National Area.
5. The planning system prescribes permitted land uses.

#### **Land Management and lease administration**

6. Responsibility for land management and lease administration within the Central National Area is shared by the ACT Government, the Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD) and the NCA.
7. Each land manager, either directly or via leases they issue, is responsible for the extent to which they constrain, allow or mandate particular land uses from within those permitted under the planning system.
8. Land management decisions cannot be inconsistent with the planning system.

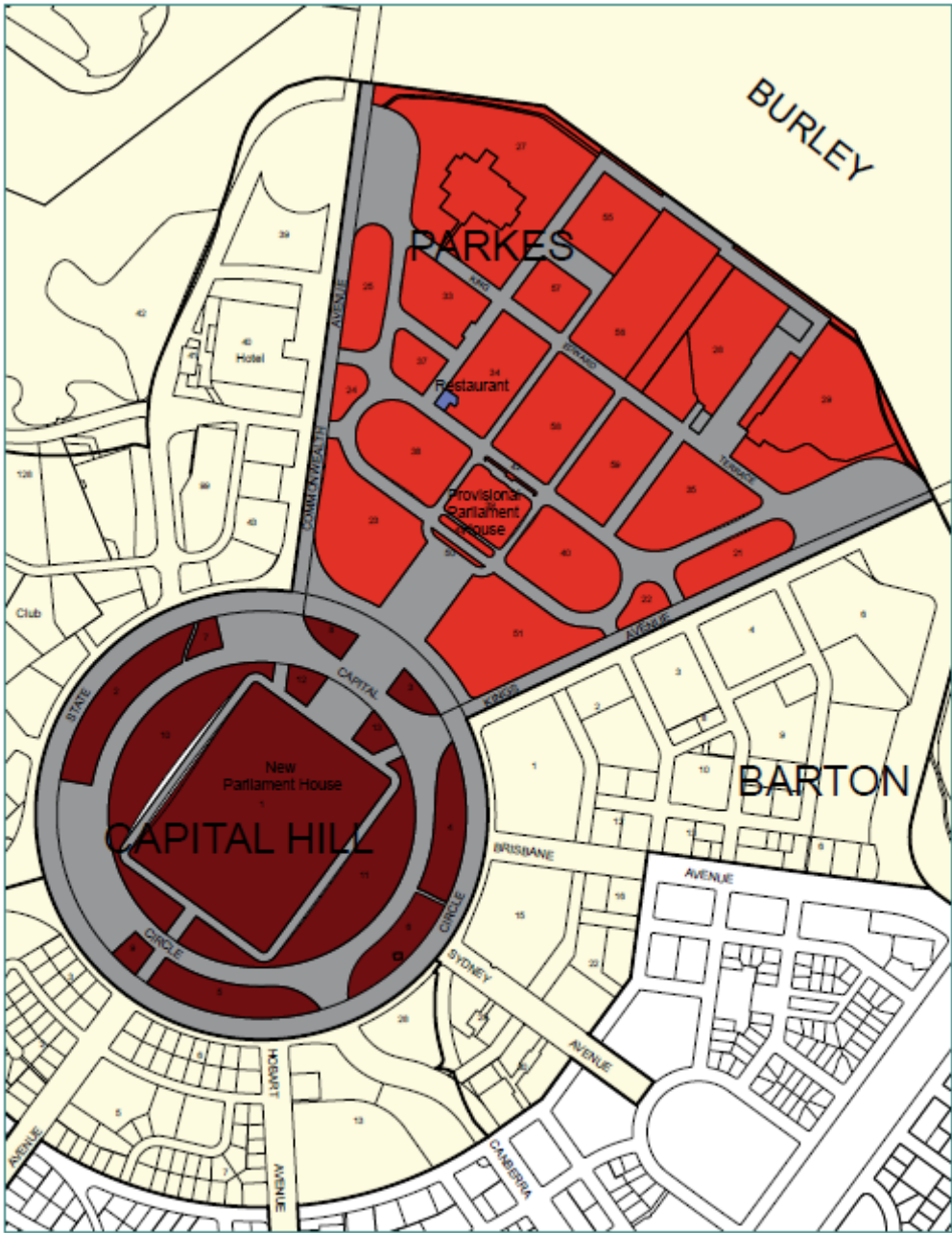
## The changing nature of the working environment in the Parliamentary Triangle

9. The terms 'Parliamentary Triangle' and 'National Triangle' formally refer to the areas bounded by Commonwealth, Kings and Constitution Avenues.
10. The Triangle, however named, does not include the areas of Barton and Acton.
11. Given recent community debate about the provision of services and amenities in broader parts of the Central National Area, this submission has been prepared with reference to the Central National Areas of Parkes, Barton, Russell and Acton.

### Parkes (Parliamentary Zone)

12. The National Capital Plan describes the Parliamentary Zone as *'the physical manifestation of Australian democratic government and the home of the nation's most important cultural and judicial institutions and symbols.'*
13. The development of dedicated office buildings in the Parliamentary Zone ceased in the early 1970's - the Treasury Building being the last of these.
14. There has been growth in the size of the Parliamentary Service and in Parliament-related employment. New Parliament House opened in 1988.
15. Over recent decades, there has been a trend towards intensifying institutional use of buildings in the Parliamentary Zone. This includes:
  - a. the recently completed extension to the National Gallery of Australia (2010);
  - b. opening of the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (2009);
  - c. completion of a new National Portrait Gallery (2008);
  - d. occupation of a refurbished East Block by the National Archives of Australia (1998);
  - e. extension of the café at The Lobby – now including a small bakery (2009);
  - f. development of kiosks, restaurant and an exhibition space at Commonwealth Place (2002-2009) and
  - g. completion of the National Science and Technology Centre – Questacon (1988).
16. The trend towards institutional use has not resulted in a material increase in the level employment based within the Parliamentary Zone.
17. A map showing the Parliamentary Zone, with the permitted land uses, is at Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Parliamentary Zone – Permitted Land Use

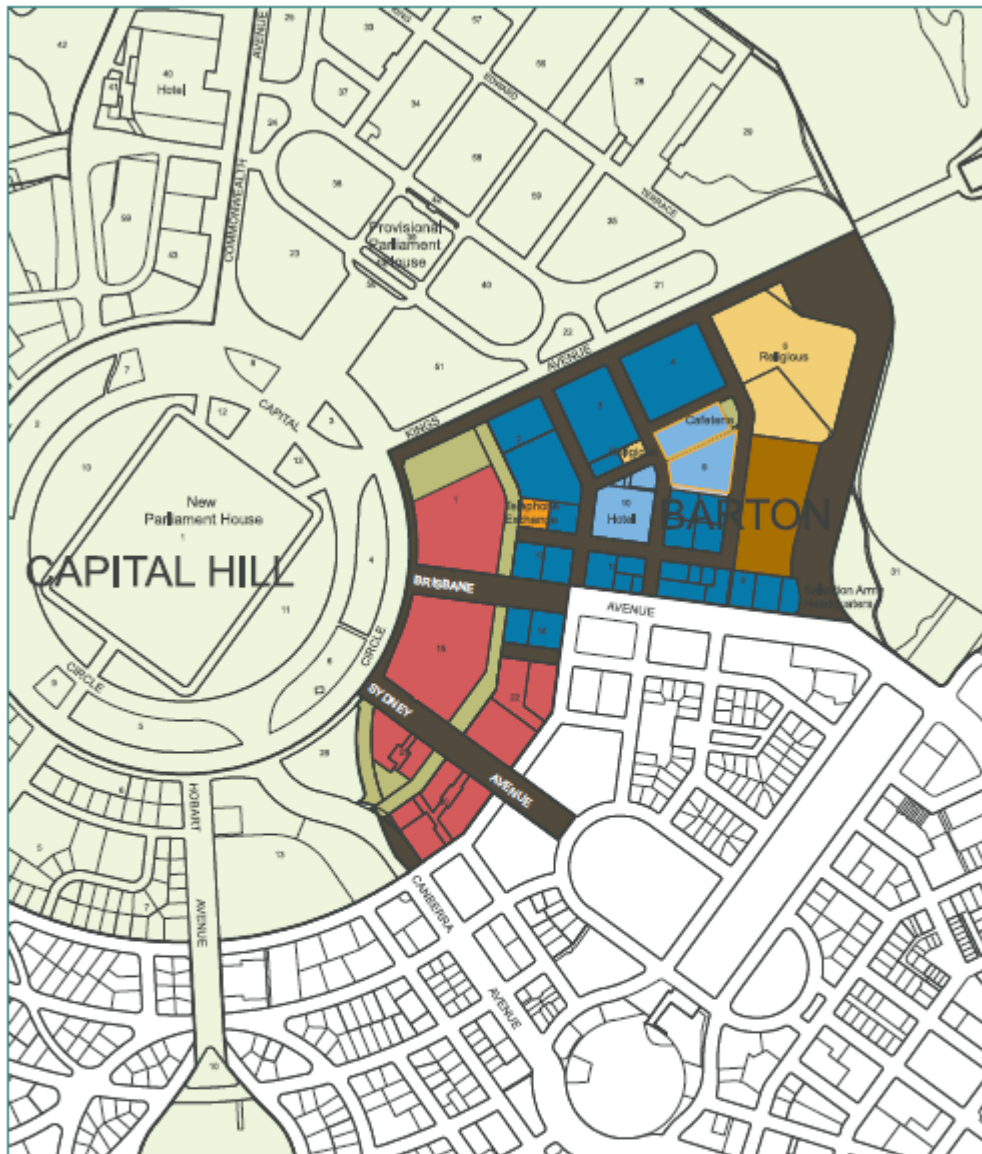


- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #800000; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Parliamentary Use    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #cccccc; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Road                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to Appendix H for Design and Siting conditions which apply to all blocks</li> <li>• Refer to Appendix T.6 for the Master Plan for the Parliamentary Zone</li> </ul> |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ff0000; border: 1px solid black;"></span> National Capital Use | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffff00; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Adjoining Central National Map Areas |  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #0000ff; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Commercial           |  |  |

## Barton

18. The National Capital Plan describes the York Park precinct (comprising the north western portions of the suburb of Barton) as having a role in the daily functions of government, providing sites for the headquarters of major national organisations and playing an international role in receiving visiting officials and dignitaries.
19. In the 1990's, the Australian Government discontinued a previous and longstanding policy of mandating the location of individual Government departments and agencies. This enabled agency heads to choose their own location and many have chosen Barton. That policy position remains current.
20. Around the same time, the Australian Government undertook an asset divestment program, selling office buildings to private owners. Government departments and agencies became tenants of many of those buildings. That policy also continues to have effect today.
21. Despite the privatisation of office buildings in Barton, many of the surface car parks remained under Government ownership. These sites are now also progressively being sold for development – primarily as office buildings.
22. As a result of the intensification of office use in Barton, the employee population (government and non-government employment) has grown by approximately 50 percent in the past two decades.
23. In 2005, the NCA updated the York Park and Environs Master Plan with the York Park Master Plan (Appendix T2 of the National Capital Plan).
24. The York Park Master Plan provides for a vibrant and high quality array of mixed-use development including residential, hotel, structured parking and 'Retail Plaza' (serving the retail and personal service needs of those living and working in the immediate area).
25. Amendment 57 to the National Capital Plan (gazetted in 2009) expanded the range of permitted uses for Section 9 Barton (currently the open air car park behind the Edmund Barton Building), and mandates a 'Retail Plaza' in a similar fashion to York Park. Permitted uses for this site include bank, retail and personal service establishment.
26. Some of the relevant, and key, permitted land uses in Barton are:
  - a. Retail;
  - b. Café, Restaurant, Bar;
  - c. Personal Services Establishment; and
  - d. Bank.
27. A map showing the York Park Precinct in Barton, with the permitted land uses, is at Figure 2.

Figure 2: Barton – Permitted Land Use



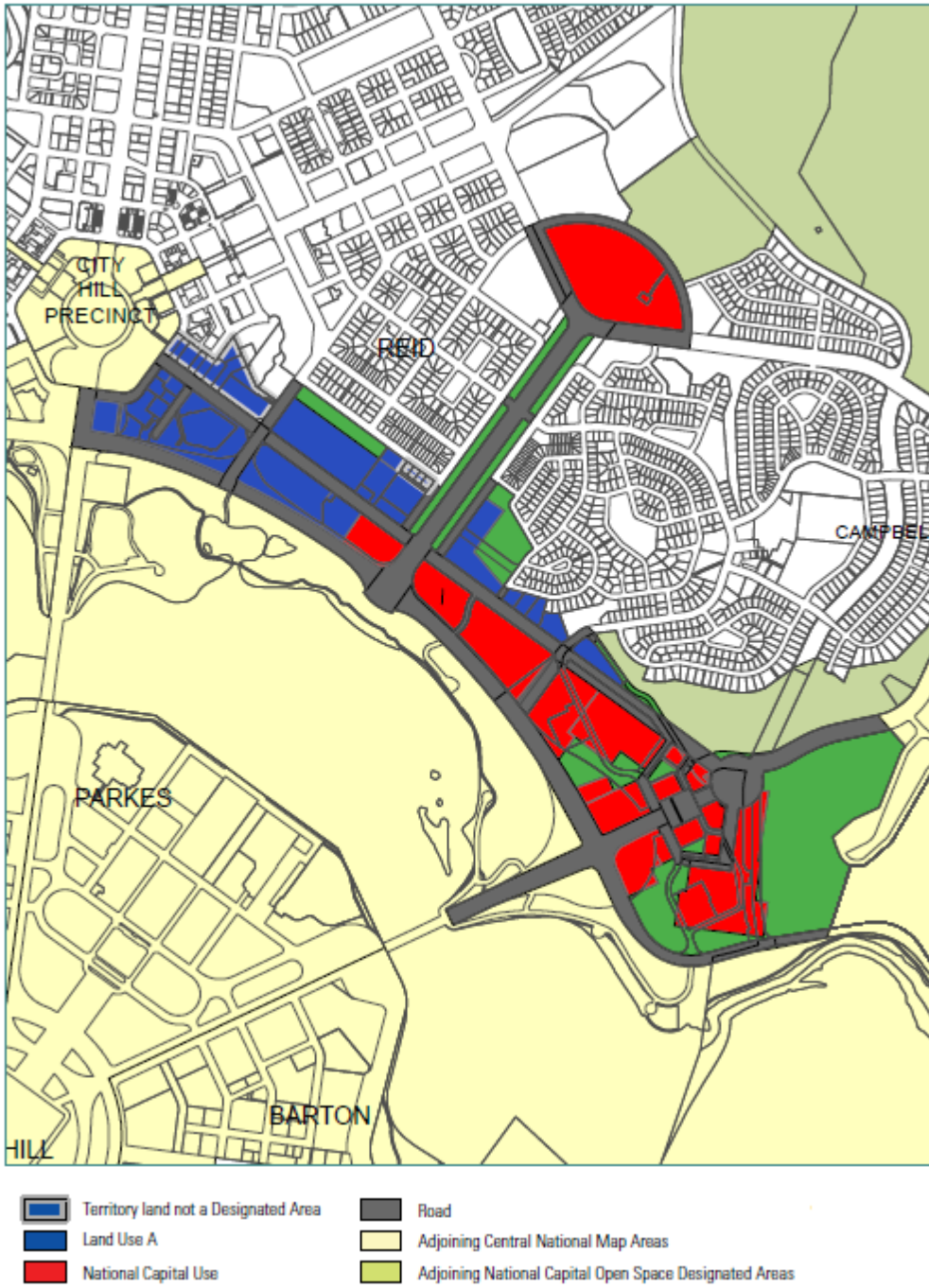
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <span style="color: red;">■</span> National Capital Use | <span style="color: orange;">■</span> Communications Facility |
| <span style="color: blue;">■</span> Offices             | <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Community Facility      |
| <span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> Commercial     | <span style="color: brown;">■</span> Residential              |
| <span style="color: black;">■</span> Road               | <span style="color: darkblue;">■</span> Land Use A            |
| <span style="color: grey;">■</span> Carpark             |   |
| <span style="color: green;">■</span> Open Space         |   |

- Refer to Appendix U for Section 6 and blocks 12 and 13 Section 9 Barton.
- Refer to Appendix H for Design and Siting Conditions which apply to all blocks.
- Refer to Appendix T.2 for York Park Master Plan
- On-site car parking shall be provided, at a rate of 1 space per 100 square meters of gross floor area, for new offices approved throughout the Central National Area (Barton). A higher on-site and/or off-site provision may be required by the Authority in specific cases, after taking into account the relationship between on-site parking, off-site parking opportunities and the capacity of public transport in the area.
- Refer to Block specific Land Use Policies on the following page
- Numbers refer to section number

## **Russell and Constitution Avenue**

28. The Russell precinct is the traditional home to Australia's defence capability in the National Capital. Indeed, the Royal Military College (Duntroon), immediately to the east of Russell, predates the naming of Canberra itself by one year.
29. Development over the past century has seen increasing and intensive development in the area for secure office facilities.
30. Including allowance for expansion of particular security agencies in the past decade, the employee population at Russell has increased in the order of 20 percent.
31. No other land uses have been introduced (eg. no residential use) and Russell retains the character of an office/business park.
32. Constitution Avenue is presently undergoing a transformation to become a densely developed urban boulevard.
33. Along the western half of Constitution Avenue (from Anzac Parade to Russell) future development will allow for a variety of uses including residential, office and hotel.
34. In keeping with the vision of a high quality and attractive urban space, land uses on sites such as Section 5 Campbell mandate active frontages (commercial and retail uses) at ground level fronting key thoroughfares (such as Constitution Avenue).
35. A map showing Russell and Constitution Avenue, with the permitted land uses, is at Figure 3.

Figure 3: Russell and Constitution Ave – Permitted Land Use





## **Acton**

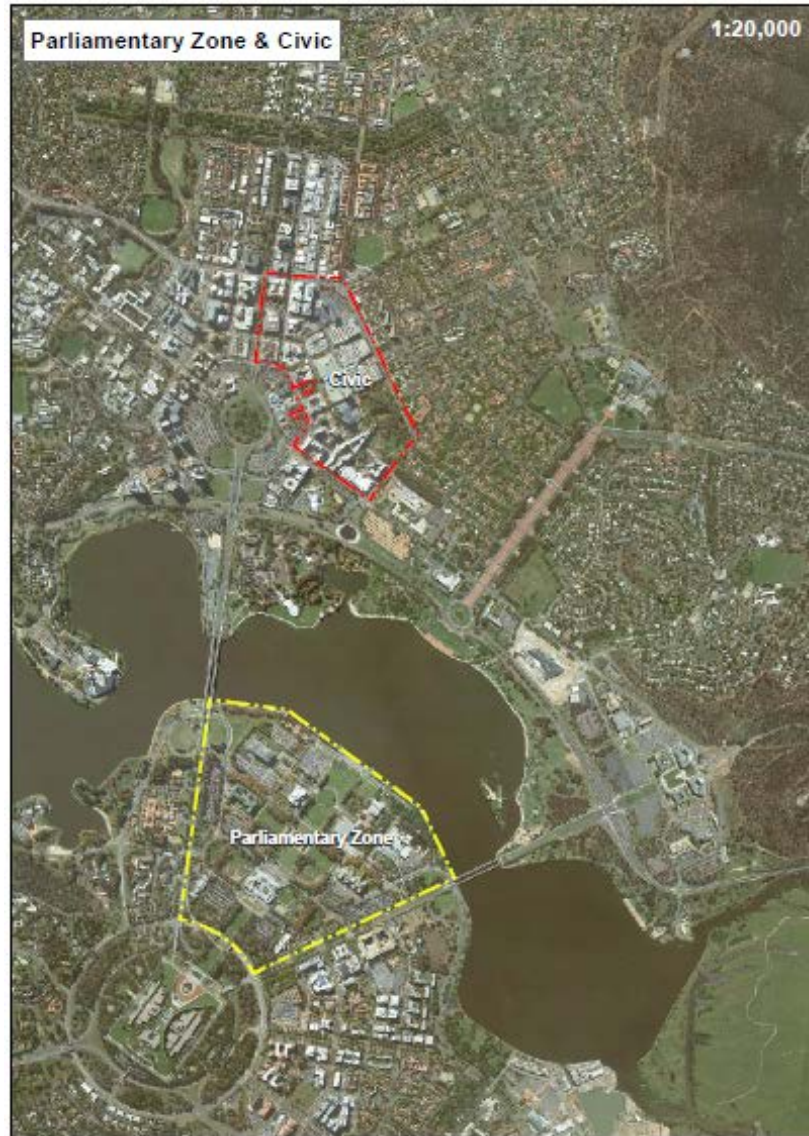
36. Originally the site of the Royal Canberra Hospital, Acton Peninsula was the subject of a land swap between the Australian and ACT Governments in the mid 1990's.
37. The Australian Government transferred control of the Kingston Harbour to the ACT Government and received Acton Peninsula for development of the National Museum of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.
38. Beyond the development of those institutions, there has been little to no change in land use over the past two decades.
39. All land on Acton Peninsula is designated for 'National Capital Use'.

## **The adequacy of the retail services available in the precinct against the benchmark of like employment precincts located in the Capital**

### **Parke (Parliamentary Zone)**

40. The primary employment base of the Parliamentary Zone is office and institutional.
41. The Parliamentary Zone is located approximately 2km from Civic, and 3km from Kingston or Manuka. It is also within walking distance of Barton with its increasing amenities.
42. For benchmark purposes, given the precinct size, mix of uses and employment density, a reasonable comparison would be the Deakin West precinct.
43. Deakin West contains a mix of office and institutional uses (private hospitals). There is no residential accommodation within the precinct and, accordingly, very little activity outside of office and institution opening hours.
44. Both the Parliamentary Zone and Deakin West are serviced by a number of small-scale, local kiosks/concession style amenities with a focus on food and beverages.
45. In both the Parliamentary Zone and Deakin West, these amenities are often located in office or institutional buildings.
46. The Parliamentary Zone has additional concessions such as bookstores and gift shops associated with each of the national institutions. Parliament House provides postal services.
47. Employees in the Parliamentary Zone who seek a wider array of retail amenities are likely to travel to Kingston or Manuka shops or, more likely, the Civic Centre.
48. Employees in Deakin West who seek a wider array of retail amenities are likely to travel to Curtin shops or, more likely, Woden Town Centre.
49. The distance from Deakin West to Woden (a little over 3km) is greater than the distance from the Parliamentary Zone to Civic.
50. The frequency and efficiency of public transport is also lower in Deakin West. The Parliamentary Zone has 995 bus services per day (not including the Centenary Loop), compared with 141 in Deakin West.
51. A map comparing the location of the Parliamentary Zone to Civic and Deakin West to Woden, at the same scale in each case, as at [Figure 4](#).

Figure 4: Comparison of PZ-Civic and Deakin West-Woden



## Barton

52. The primary employment base of Barton is office, supplemented by hospitality (hotel and restaurant) and professional services (eg medical). Surrounding land uses include high density residential (both existing and forecast development).
53. The majority of buildings in Barton are located less than 2km from Kingston or Manuka.
54. For benchmark purposes, given the precinct size, mix of uses (including residential and hotel) and employment density, a reasonable comparison would be the City West – New Acton precinct.
55. City West and New Acton contains a mix of office, residential, hotel and retail facilities. It is a newly developed precinct, responding to demand for vibrant, refined inner-city living. The precinct is active well beyond office opening hours.
56. The development of New Acton was enabled by provisions of the National Capital Plan that focused on creating a high-quality urban form with active frontages at street level.
57. The planning framework established for New Acton is very similar to that established for Barton. The locations have many similarities in their market appeal. New Acton is probably 5-10 years ahead of Barton in the development cycle.
58. In time, it is reasonable to expect the character of Barton to develop in a similar fashion to New Acton.
59. Under the planning and development provisions (for existing buildings in New Acton and future buildings in Barton), employee and resident needs would be serviced by small, local retail facilities. New Acton already has a small food retailer/corner store and it is very reasonable to expect that Barton will attract a similar establishment in time.
60. Both precincts are already service by an array of other small amenities focused on food and beverages.
61. Employees or residents in Barton who seek a wider array of retail amenities are likely to travel to Kingston or Manuka shops.
62. Employees or residents of City West/New Acton who seek a wider array of retail amenities are likely to travel to the Civic Centre.
63. The distance from New Acton to Civic is comparable to the distance from Barton to Kingston or Manuka. Public transport is comparable in each area and both are well-served by pedestrian path networks.
64. A map comparing the location of the Barton to Kingston/Manuka and City West/New Acton to Civic, at the same scale in each case, is at [Figure 5](#).

Figure 5: Comparison of Barton-Manuka/Kingston and City West/New Acton-Civic



## Russell and Constitution Avenue

65. The primary employment base of the Russell is office. It has the character of an office or business park.
66. The Russell precinct is located approximately 3km from Civic.
67. For benchmark purposes, given the precinct size, almost single use (office) and employment density, a reasonable comparison would be the Brindabella Business Park at Canberra Airport.
68. Brindabella Business Park contains almost exclusively office employment and there is virtually no activity outside of office hours.
69. Both Russell and Brindabella Business Park are serviced by small-scale kiosks/concession style amenities within office buildings.
70. Employees in Russell who seek a wider array of retail amenities are likely travel to the Civic Centre.
71. Employees in Brindabella Business Park who seek a wider array of retail amenities are likely to travel to the Majura Park retail area.
72. The distance from Brindabella Business Park to Majura Park is comparable to the distance from Russell to Civic.
73. The planning framework for Constitution Avenue contains provisions allowing higher intensity of retail amenity along frontage to Russell.
74. Employees at Brindabella Office Park have less modal choice in comparison to the Russell precinct. They are also a requirement to commute further with 47 percent of Majura employees living in Tuggeranong and Belconnen. Thirty percent of Russell employees live in North Canberra (ABS Census, 2011).
75. Russell is serviced by 392 bus route trips per day as opposed to Brindabella Office Park which is serviced by 80 on weekdays.
76. The frequency and efficiency of public transport is considerably better at Russell.
77. A map comparing the location of Russell to Civic and Brindabella Business Park to Majura Park retail, at the same scale in each case, is at [Figure 6](#).

Figure 6: Comparison of Russell-Civic and Brindabella-Majura



## Acton

78. The primary (and almost sole) employment base of Acton Peninsula is institutional. It is somewhat disconnected from other developed areas.
79. Acton Peninsula is located approximately 2km from Civic.
80. For benchmark purposes, given the institutional use and relative isolation, a reasonable comparison would be the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG).
81. Both Acton Peninsula and the ANBG are visitor, collection and research-focused employment locations. There are no other land uses in either precinct and both are virtually deserted (the ANBG is even gated and locked) outside institution opening hours.
82. Both Acton Peninsula and the ANBG are serviced by small-scale, local kiosks/concession style amenities with a focus on food and beverages and visitor retail (souvenirs). These amenities are located within institution buildings.
83. Employees from Acton or the ANBG who seek a wider array of retail amenities are likely to travel to the Australian National University service precinct or, more likely, Civic Centre.
84. The distances from Acton or ANBG to Civic are comparable. Both locations are served by a small number of public transport routes.
85. A map comparing the location of Acton Peninsula and the ANBG to Civic, at the same scale, is at [Figure 7](#).



Figure 7: Comparison of Acton-Civic and ANBG-Civic



## **Increasing access to services**

86. The third Term of Reference of this Inquiry reads, *'Should these services be considered inadequate, recommends steps that would ameliorate that inadequacy'*.
87. Without wishing to pre-empt the Committee's view on that proposition, the NCA offers the following information on steps that it has already taken, is taking, or could take, to increase access to amenity in each area.

### **Parkes (Parliamentary Zone)**

88. Land within the Parliamentary Zone is currently held by Australian Government agencies or the Australian Parliament. This reflects the national significance of this important precinct.
89. On the basis of that special national significance, the NCA would advise against giving long-term private property rights, of the kind typically needed to stimulate purely commercial private investment, within the Parliamentary Zone.
90. While there may be longer term options for private-public partnerships in larger scale investment, any near-term increase in amenities and services in the Parliamentary Zone will primarily need to be supported by Government.
91. There are two broad approaches recommended by the NCA – increasing the range of services provided by existing commercial concessions and making it easier to access existing services in Civic, Kingston and Manuka.
92. A third approach would involve the construction of new kiosks to suit provision of additional amenity. Given the experience of the kiosks in Commonwealth Place (which were primarily designed to serve the needs of visitors), careful assessment of the underlying business model would be required prior to assessing sites or commencing the design process. The NCA could not fund construction of new kiosks within its existing capital program. Additional budget funding would be necessary.

### ***Increasing the range of services in existing concessions***

93. Each of the existing buildings in Parkes contains at least one commercial concession. Most of these are focused on the service of food and beverages but that appears to be due to the market rather than any planning or licence-based prohibition on providing other appropriate services.
94. The NCA has already made a commitment to write to each existing concession asking them to consider whether there are viable opportunities to increase the range of services they offer. The NCA will also ask what barriers, if any, the existing operators perceive.
95. The NCA is also currently seeking views from the community on options for increasing access to amenities. One of the early community contributions suggested it would be helpful to have a single 'register' of the different services available in

each location. The NCA has agreed to examine whether this can be incorporated into The Canberra Guide app. (see [www.thecanberraguide.com.au](http://www.thecanberraguide.com.au)).

### ***Making it easier to access existing services in Civic, Kingston and Manuka***

96. Another approach to facilitating access to a broader range of amenities is to focus on making it easier to reach existing services in nearby Kingston, Manuka and Civic.
97. This approach will enable access to a far greater array of services than would ever be possible in local provision.
98. For those who have traveled to work by means other than private motor vehicle, the two best options are public transport or active transport (walking or cycling)

### ***Public transport***

99. The ACT Government is currently operating a 'Centenary Loop Bus' and has indicated there is potential for a longer term service of similar nature if supported by passenger demand.
100. There would also be merit in the NCA working with the ACT Government to promote more information about routes and the cost of using public transport.
101. Further enhancements could take the form of user-friendly 'travel planners' through mobile-optimised websites, and through access to 'real-time' information on existing bus services. Google Transit already operates very effectively for the ACTION bus network.

### ***Walking and cycling***

102. In the realm of active transport, one of the cheapest and easiest access-enablers could be small-scale bike share scheme for employees.
103. Most government employers already have a commitment to encouraging 'healthy lifestyle' in their employment arrangements. Expansion of this concept to include provision of a small number of shared bicycles would enable easy access to Civic, Manuka or Kingston within a regular lunch break.
104. The NCA already owns two 'office' bicycles (one at the Treasury Building and one at Regatta Point) that are used by employees for official purposes such as attending meetings without using a fleet car or taxi. There would be little-to-no additional cost in expanding the permitted uses of those bicycles to allow private use at lunchtime where there was no pre-booked official use intended.
105. This would both improve the employees' access to amenities and align with the employer's commitment to healthy lifestyle by encouraging 'incidental exercise'.
106. This is an initiative that could be introduced by individual employers, by co-operative agreement of co-tenants in each building or co-ordinated by the NCA across the precinct.

## **Acton**

107. Given the institutional use of Acton Peninsula, the approach in increasing access to amenities for employees would be the same as that recommended for the Parliamentary Zone – expand existing facilities and increase employer support for active transport options.

## **Barton**

108. The vast majority of land in Barton is under private control.
109. This indicates that future amenity provision is most efficiently and effectively likely to be provided by the private sector. Such provision will be market driven. The nature and timing of service startup will be guided by a private investment business assessment. In short, when it is profitable, they will come.
110. It is important to ensure that Government, as land manager and planning regulator, does not unduly fetter the private sector's ability to deliver these amenities.
111. In the case of Barton, not only has the NCA sought to reduce Government restrictions of mixed used, it has sought to improve the overall urban and social outcome by mandating that development on a reasonably small number of prominent sites must contain 'Retail Plazas'.
112. The National Capital Plan definition of 'Retail Plaza' is development of retail and personal service establishments at street level.
113. A map of the sites in Barton where Retail Plazas are required, when those sites are developed, is at [Figure 8](#).

Figure 8: Barton - Provision for future 'Retail Plazas'



<p>Australian Government National Capital Authority</p> <p><small>Treasury Building, King Edwards Terrace, Parkes ACT 2600. GPO Box 373 Canberra ACT 2601 T 02 5211 2855. F 02 5273 4427. www.nationalcapital.gov.au www.virtuacanberra.gov.au</small></p>	<p>DRAWING TITLE: Barton &amp; Forrest National Capital Plan Provisions for Additional Amenities</p> <p><small>© 2012 Commonwealth of Australia.</small></p>	DATE: 27/05/2013	
		SCALE: 1:5,000	
DRAWN: RN			
CHECKED:			
		REVISION:	

## **Russell and Constitution Avenue**

114. Increasing access to amenities in Russell and on Constitution Avenue can be best achieved through a combination of the approaches taken for the Parliamentary Zone and Barton.
115. Existing small service providers could be encouraged to consider expanding the range of services they offer and employers could consider introduction of bike sharing arrangements to make short journeys to Civic achievable.
116. The planning provisions attached to key development sites on Constitution Avenue will also stimulate increased service provision as those sites are developed.
117. Most, if not all, of the sites on the northern side of Constitution Avenue from Anzac Parade to Russell are future development or redevelopment sites controlled, or soon to be controlled, by the private sector.
118. This indicates that future amenity provision is most efficiently and effectively likely to be provided by the private sector. Such provision will be market driven. The nature and timing of service startup will be guided by a private investment business assessment. In short, when it is profitable, they will come.
119. It is important to ensure that Government, as land manager and planning regulator, does not unduly fetter the private sector's ability to deliver these amenities.
120. In the case of Constitution Avenue, the NCA allows mixed use on all of these northern sites. The range of permitted uses is as diverse as bank, café and personal service (with retail permitted as an ancillary use). The planning provisions require that development encourage dynamic activity, 'active frontages' (for example shops) and a high quality urban domain.
121. A map of the sites on Constitution Avenue where 'active frontages' should be developed is at [Figure 9](#).

Figure 9: Russell/Constitution Avenue - Provision for future 'active frontages'

