

David Merz

The Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT

Dear Sirs

## **Submission to the Enquiry into the proposed Immigration Bridge**

I believe this matter consists of two main issues.

- Is there a case for an immigration monument?
- Is there a community need and benefit that will be met by a pedestrian bridge of the type and location proposed?

### **Case for a Monument**

As a former migration officer, proud to have facilitated the entry of many migrants and refugees to Australia, I believe there is a case for a monument to recognize the significant and ongoing contribution of migrants. However, the proposed bridge listing the names of only a small proportion of those migrants is not an appropriate memorial. Listing only those who have paid their money is exclusive and divisive failing to recognize the ongoing contribution of all migrants, including those yet to arrive. In addition, as many members of the community do clearly not support the proposed bridge, it could become a focus of ongoing negative comment with undesirable anti migrant fallout.

### **Need for a Bridge**

I have not seen any evidence to support the need for a pedestrian bridge as proposed. I believe there would be very limited pedestrian traffic given the distance that the Albert Hall end would be from other public buildings and parking.

I have read other submissions and spoken with friends and colleagues in the Canberra community. Looking at the artist's impression I agree with views that the proposed bridge will have a jarring impact on the existing lakeside landscape. In addition the dangers it will create for sailors and others using recreational water craft raises issues of negligence and liability. Other submissions have addressed these issues in detail so I will not repeat them. However, in the event of an accident one wonders whether there would ever be any attempt to link liability to those families who finance a bridge by paying to have their names on it.

### **Crime**

I would suggest that the Committee, in their deliberations, give close consideration to the many publications on minimizing criminal activity through sound design. In 2001 the NSW Department of Infrastructure introduced crime prevention guidelines to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. The guidelines require consent

authorities to ensure development provides safety and security to users and the community. “If a development presents a crime risk, the guidelines can be used to justify modification of the development to minimize crime risk, or, refusal of the development on the grounds that crime risk cannot be appropriately minimised.”

A pedestrian bridge over 400 meters long and some 12 meters above the water that is not overlooked by any buildings or passing traffic could present an attractive environment to carry out a purse snatch, mugging or other assault. There is the added possibility of threatening to throw the victim over the rail and into the water 12 meters below if they resist in any way. Assuming only modest numbers of passing pedestrians graffiti and other antisocial activity could be carried out with minimal disruption. Once any criminal incidents become common knowledge one could expect a reduction in pedestrians prepared to use the bridge and the crime risk would increase, unless the bridge had a permanent security patrol.

### **Summary**

I believe the proposed Immigration Bridge is not an appropriate memorial to the contribution of migrants, and that options for an alternative, more inclusive, memorial should be explored.

The proposed Immigration Bridge will be a jarring addition to the peaceful lakeside landscape, it will increase the risks for sailors and other recreation lake users, and it will present an unacceptable crime risk.

David Merz  
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