

Caroline Le Couteur MLA

ACT Greens

Spokesperson for Planning, Territory and Municipal Services, Business and Economic  
Development, Land and Property Services, Arts and Heritage.

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MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Office of the Clerk Assistant (Committees)  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 620 Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

8 September 2011

To whom it may concern

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories  
Inquiry into National Memorials Ordinance 1928**

I am writing to raise my concerns regarding the current administration of the Canberra National Memorials Committee (CNMC) established by the National Memorials Ordinance 1928 (the Ordinance).

With regard to membership of the CNMC, the statutory appointments as prescribed by 3(2) of the Ordinance establish a committee of nine people, none of whom are required to possess any expertise in planning issues or the development of commemorative memorials. Since 1953 the Ordinance has made provision for two members to be appointed from amongst persons who are residents of the Australian Capital Territory, and to the best of my understanding, these positions have never been filled. Any review of the Ordinance or the administration of the CNMC must ensure adequate representation for residents of the ACT in the deliberations and decision making of this body that so explicitly affects their community. Such representation might easily be achieved through the Ordinance statutory appointments including the Chief Minister of the ACT (or their appointee), the ACT Senators or the ACT Members of Parliament.

There is a public perception that the meetings and deliberations of the CNMC occur behind closed doors, without due public scrutiny or consultation. Any review of the Ordinance must seek to invest greater transparency and public consultation in the processes by which the Minister or the CNMC approve, amend or reject proposals for national memorials. This could easily be achieved by providing for public submissions on concept and site proposals earlier in the process. The example of the World War Memorials presently proposed for the shore of Lake Burley Griffin make clear that processes currently in place are manifestly inadequate. It may be necessary to halt any CNMC projects currently under development due to their passage through inadequate approvals processes.

As the Joint Standing Committee is no doubt aware, many Canberrans currently feel aggrieved that they do not enjoy the appropriate representation on the CNMC as explicitly required by the Ordinance; and that without adequate local representation, the CNMC is currently imposing unpopular and inappropriate war memorials on the Canberra community. Given the proposed gains for ACT independence under the *Territories Self-Government Amendment (Disallowance and Amendment of Laws)*

*Bill 2011*, the current review of the operation of the Ordinance and CNMC seems like an excellent opportunity to further reduce Federal political paternalism over the ACT.

Please contact my office if you wish to discuss these matters further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caroline Le Couteur".

Caroline Le Couteur MLA  
Greens Member for Molonglo