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SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE ALLOCATION OF LAND TO DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

As both a Yarralumla resident and the founding Director of Balloon Aloft in Canberra I have followed the proposed changes to the landuse, particularly as related to the siting of a diplomatic enclave in Stirling Park, with great concern.

I am in a position to regularly appreciate the essential lake corridor of Canberra from a perspective that gives a perfect overview. The Draft 78 proposal will without doubt create a serious incursion into that corridor.

The siting of embassies or residences in the Park will damage forever the greater lake environment and its ability to be used and appreciated by Canberra residents for all time in ways we may not even yet appreciate.

The proposed development will interrupt the movement of people in the area and force all traffic into the extremely sensitive and environmentally important ridgeline immediately adjoining the embassy site.

Worse still is that this small diplomatic region will go no where near to solving the long term requirements for diplomatic land and does not even appear to be the preferred short term solution.

Long term there will be very large high quality development areas of Canberra along for example the Molonglo corridor. There is a well established precedent in O'Malley of not locating all diplomatic missions in the central Canberra area. Why not solve the issue properly and start work now on a longer term and more thorough solution?

Short term sites such as the Yarralumla brickworks have many advantages for all parties without destroying the lake corridor, but require time and effort (and possibly money) in negotiating with the ACT Government.

The NCA is in a position to preserve irreplaceable land for future generations and solve the requirements for diplomatic land for all time. These options however require more planning, communication and possible expense than the short term ad hoc fix of a quick bite out of Stirling Park.

The NCA would be commended if it fully embraced the long term solution that would avoid the environmental, social and cultural damage that will result in the current proposal. If the NCA is not prepared to make that decision it needs to be directed to do so.

Please note I have avoided including significant technical site detail in this submission as I note it is included in other submissions.

By email

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21 January 2013