

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE
NATIONAL CAPITAL AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES**

Inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority

Chair: Senator Kate Lundy

Report on National Capital Authority inquiry

Media Conference – 11am Wed 16 July – Parliament House 2R2

The Federal Parliament's committee on the national capital has presented its report on the federal agency that oversees planning issues for much of Canberra entitled ***The Way Forward - Inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority***.

Committee Chair Senator Kate Lundy said "the committee identified three key objectives which guided its findings".

- the committee's first objective is to ensure that the Commonwealth protect and promote the unique design of Canberra because it represents the intrinsic character of the National Capital;
- the committee's second objective is, where possible, to align land administration with planning jurisdiction, provided the first objective is achieved; and
- the committee's third objective is to foster greater co-operation and collaboration between the Commonwealth and the ACT Government on planning and related matters.

The key findings and recommendations include:

- That the Commonwealth Government affirm its direct and enduring commitment to the future of Canberra as a planned national capital on behalf of all Australians.
- The governance arrangements of the National Capital Authority (NCA) be changed to give more independence to the NCA board commensurate with its status as a statutory authority. Persons appointed to the board should have qualifications or expertise relevant to a field related to the NCA's functions. Transparency and accountability to the Parliament will be enhanced through the Chairperson of the board appearing twice a year at public hearings before this committee.
- The most important feature of the report is the future planning framework. The principles and policies that define the Commonwealth's interest in the national capital can be enhanced by their inclusion in the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act. The National Capital Plan (NCP) is in need of updating to respond to the modern challenges of climate change and ecological sustainability as well as providing for more effective consideration of future transport needs. In this way, the Commonwealth should continue to set the framework for future planning.
- The development of a single integrated planning document which comprises the NCP and the Territory Plan, with agreed definitions and clear geographic boundaries between the two plans.
- The committee recommends a working group comprising the NCA and the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) should prepare detailed proposals of an integrated, co-operative approach which would be considered as part of a broader package of updating the NCP and any legislative amendment. It is envisaged that this process could take around 18 months.
- The committee, therefore, has proposed that as an interim measure in order to resolve planning duplication: the Commonwealth consider amendments to the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act to permit the NCA and ACTPLA to negotiate a memorandum of understanding to delegate the planning jurisdiction for Territory Land which has designated status.
- The committee has also made recommendations to remove the 'gap' in heritage protection on Territory Land that fall within designated areas of the NCP.

"The committee is confident that its key objectives are met through the recommendations. I believe these recommendations and the others contained in the report provide a solid foundation for the way forward for planning in the Australian Capital Territory. They will ensure that Canberra continues to be planned in accordance with its national significance and tap into the opportunities that cooperation with the ACT Government can bring," Senator Lundy said.

The report is available from the committee's website at **www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ncet/natcapauth/** or by contacting the committee secretariat on **(02) 6277 4355** or emailing **jscncet@aph.gov.au**. **To arrange media comment:** Please contact the Chair of the Committee, Senator Kate Lundy (02) 6230 0411 (electorate office).