

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Inquiry into the administration of the *National Memorials Ordinance 1928*, the building of memorials of national significance in Canberra.

I would like to comment on the issues raised in the terms of reference for your Inquiry.

As a preamble however, I'm appalled at the failure of process that has let the current war memorials proposal for Rond Terrace on the north shore of Lake Burley Griffin get to this stage of absurdity when most Australians believe that the Australian War Memorial, one of the early entries on the National Heritage List, is the centre of our national commemoration for all Australian who have served in wars and this is attested to by its continuing high visitation. Australian citizens have since 1974 expected that the Australian Heritage Commission and its successor, the Australian Heritage Council, through their legislative powers would advise government on the protection of the heritage values of places, often the people's public places. But in this case this has not occurred from my reading of the press reports, and indeed it highlights how the NCA had become a law unto itself seeking to 'activate' the foreshores of Lake Burley Griffin by inappropriate developments aimed at increasing tourism.

However, the listing of the Parliamentary Vista is only on the Commonwealth Heritage List [see Appendix 1 for its statement of heritage values and cultural significance] rather than the Minister having to exercise the heritage processes of the relevant sections of the EPBC Act as with NHL places. In addition, the tenure of Commonwealth and designated lands within the Parliamentary Triangle has been a vexed and long running issue that would have been dealt with long ago in most local government situations, but, as this is a matter of power for certain members of Parliament and /or appointed non-elected committees, it has been tip toed around and slid under the radar of public comment. There have been 'contests' previously over the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, the Centenary of Women's Suffrage memorial, the redevelopment of the forecourt area to the National Library, Reconciliation Place to name a few such issues in the Parliamentary Vista.

This current proposal developed over several years by the National Capital Authority with total disregard for the conservation of the heritage listed places in the area demonstrates serious failure in the administration of the *National Memorials Ordinance 1928*. Fortunately, this Inquiry provides an opportunity for ensuring that proper regard is given to heritage conservation from the outset of any proposal for a memorial, and to stop the current proposal from being constructed as it is out of scale and wrongly located. Therefore it is timely to address the range of issues behind the current fiasco and bring decision making into the national gaze through open and well publicised consultation notices/discussion papers.

The membership of the Canberra National Memorials Committee (CNMC):

This committee should have relevant experts –national heritage expert, social historian, landscape architect/designer, urban planner and representatives of both major political parties

in the Australian Parliament and a representative of the ACT government given the local population resident in the national capital. There are expert heritage associations such as Australia ICOMOS and membership organisations such as the National Trust and Australian Garden History Society who could supply excellent nominees experienced in heritage conservation and cultural landscapes in particular.

The process for decision-making by the CNMC:

Given the title of this committee, it should be controlled by the national parliament delegated to one of its agencies to act as secretariat such as the one responsible for national heritage who would then make a statutory report back to parliament outlining the views of experts, local citizens and the wider Australian public about the memorial issue being debated. The charter of the CNMC should require that it acknowledges primacy of heritage values and then it follows that there be proper regard be given from the outset to heritage impacts of any proposed memorial in heritage listed places and the fact that the Committee is creating or adding to the stock of national heritage.

Mechanisms for the CNMC to seek independent, expert advice:

Proposals for a monument to be erected on a heritage place must be accompanied by advice from an independent heritage expert as to the impact of the proposal on the heritage values of the place. The expert should be chosen at random from a panel of experts accredited by the Committee. Where the heritage place is a significant cultural landscape the expert must have appropriate skills and experience in that area, i.e. not just any architect or historian.

Opportunities for improving transparency in the administration of the Ordinance:

Any proposals should be advertised in the public media with provision for public comments like any development application under standard town planning regulations. The results of these consultations on siting, design, use and maintenance should then be made available publicly. The decisions of the Committee to approve any memorial should be published with reasons, and subject to appeal by any interested party under the ADJR Act.

The appropriate level of parliamentary oversight for proposed National Memorials:

Parliamentary oversight should include the Minister responsible for heritage, to ensure that the heritage values of national importance are protected and conserved. The designed landscapes of cultural heritage significance in Canberra are part of Australia's heritage and must be conserved, the Griffin legacy.

The appropriate level of public participation in the development of proposed National Memorials:

Public participation should be achieved by nominations from public organisations for membership of the Canberra National Memorials Committee and by providing opportunities for public participation in the decision making process as outlined above for a more transparent process.

If changes to the current arrangements are recommended, inquire into and report on transition provisions for current provisions for current proposals for memorials which have not yet been constructed:

Any memorials currently proposed should not be constructed, and the Joint Standing Committee should so recommend. This Committee should also recommend that no memorials be constructed without regard for the Walter Burley Griffin landscape design, a masterwork which is part of our national heritage and often regarded as a contender for World Heritage.

The question as to whether the proposed World War 1 and World War II memorials should be constructed at some other location should be subject to a public inquiry. However, as stated at the beginning of this submission, the Australian War Memorial should be the centre of commemoration in the national capital and receive proper funding and support which it has not had in recent years as reported in the press.

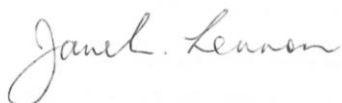
In addition, nearly every Australian town has a war memorial and these should be regarded as the distributed national collection and subject to maintenance grants. In Queensland the Minister for Public Works had such a grant fund as these memorials were much loved and often in towns without a viable population to look after them. Conservation led to increased interest in their history and a civic pride.

Australia does not need another set of new memorials as commemorative panels or names can be added to existing town memorials as is occurring even for Afghanistan veterans; nor do we need a military cemetery managed by the Department of Veteran Affairs along the lines of the American central one at Arlington as has been suggested

In addition, privately funded memorials proposals (like the lakeside war memorials) should have a limited time in which to raise money before government-allocated sites are withdrawn. This would test the level of support from the general Australian public.

In conclusion, while war memorials commemorate the dead, they also perpetuate the people who build them and whose names also appear on them. This has a downside when it also involves the incremental despoiling of our national capital by officials and appointees making unsound decisions to progress the misconceived agendas of non-elected interest groups without reference to the heritage landscape legacy; the result is a plague of plaques in the landscape.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Lennon". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Dr Jane Lennon AM

Appendix 1: Australian Heritage Database entry for **Parliament House Vista, Anzac Pde, Parkes, ACT , Australia**

Photographs



List Commonwealth Heritage List

Class Historic

Legal Status [Listed place](#) (22/06/2004)

Place ID 105466

Place File No 8/01/000/0075

Summary Statement of Significance

Design Importance

The Parliament House Vista is the central designed landscape of Canberra, that expresses the core of the Walter Burley Griffin design vision for Canberra. It is highly significant for its symbolic representation of the democratic interchange between the people and their elected representatives and its use of the natural landforms to generate a strong planning geometry. It expresses a masterly synthesis and ordering of topographical features and administrative functions to meet the needs of a national capital. The vista landscape embraces the central land axis and part of the water axis and most of the Parliamentary Triangle including the area known as the Parliamentary Zone. The significance incorporates Walter Burley Griffin's vision for the area, as the focus of Commonwealth parliamentary and governmental activity as well as national cultural life. This vision has been partly realised and the place is the setting for major, government, judicial and cultural institutions. The northern extent of the vista of Anzac Parade and the Australian War

Memorial, despite differing from the original plan, are significant for memorial purposes developed in response to the needs of the people. Despite being modified to a lesser degree to accommodate the impact of wars on Australians, the Vista now presents as a philosophical concept expressed in urban planning, landscape and architecture, to achieve a grand vision of a symbolic, unified and visually dramatic place (Criterion F.1)

(Australian Historic Themes 7.4 Federating Australia, 8.10 , Pursuing excellence in the arts and sciences)

The Parliament House Vista incorporating the central national area, is the core of the most ambitious and most successful example of twentieth century urban planning in Australia. It is important for its design pattern with large landscape and waterscape spaces with their enframing by treed avenues and at the lake by bridges, the terminal vista features of the Australian War Memorial and Mount Ainslie at the northern end and Parliament House at the southern end, with the Carillon and Captain Cook Jet creating balanced vertical features in the water plane (Criterion F.1).

The spatial setting of the buildings as features in the landscape reflects Beaux Arts planning concepts and the building masses and their careful location complement the significance of the overall landscape pattern. Across the Parliamentary Triangle, the buildings of Old Parliament House, and East and West Blocks provide a distinctive Stripped Classical architectural patterned horizontal band, that contributes to the symmetrical overall patterning of the landscape. At a higher elevation, Parliament House is a significant feature terminating the southern end of the land axis, culminating the classical landmark image of the triangle apex. The John Gorton Building (the former Administrative Building) and the Treasury Building balance the composition on King George Terrace while at the Lake edge the post-war architecture of the National Library of Australia and the High Court - National Gallery Precinct are prominent modern architectural forms and have a significant historical layering effect. The Portal Buildings provide balanced building massing at the southern end of Anzac Parade (Criterion F.1).

Avenues of trees along the terraces, roads and pathways of deciduous, pine, and eucalypt species provide colour, character, and contrast, emphasising the significance of the formal symmetrical design. Lombardy Poplars in groups of four, form sentinels at key locations. Water fountains, and statues also reinforce the significance of the total design pattern of the place. On the northern expanse of the vista the landscape pattern is the wide sweeping avenue space emphasised by red scoria gravel in the central strip and edged by large Blue Gums (Criterion F.1).

The vista landscape is significant for its richness of features. Many places in the Vista area have individual heritage significance for their architectural design and historic importance. These include Old Parliament House and Curtilage, East Block Government Offices, West Block and the Dugout, John Gorton Building, the National Library of Australia, the High Court of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, Blundells Farmhouse, Slab Outbuildings and Surrounds, the Australian War

Memorial, the Portal Buildings, The High Court - National Gallery Precinct, the Carillon, and King George V Memorial (Criteria F.1 and A3).

Within the area are important parklands and gardens enhancing the significance of the landscape setting. These include the Gardens of Old Parliament House (the former Senate and House of Representative Gardens), important for expressing their history in plantings, sports facilities, modest features and layout pattern. Also important is the Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery, a significant native style garden, and the National Rose Gardens. Commonwealth Park, the Peace Park, the Lakeshore Promenade and Kings Park are important landscapes for their design and popular use (Criteria F.1 and A3.)

Adding to the richness of the place is the manner in which Griffin's vision of democracy has also been emphasised, as places within the area have become identified with political protest actions by people, as exemplified in the significant Aboriginal Embassy site (Criteria F.1 and A3).

Historic Importance

The central national area of Canberra is strongly associated with the history of politics and government in Australia and the development of Canberra as the Australian National Capital. It is significant as the home of the Commonwealth Parliament, the focus of the Federal Government since 1927, initially in the Old Parliament House and from 1988 in the new Parliament House. The various government buildings in the area reinforce the association with Australian government and political history, including East and West Blocks, the Administrative Building, the Treasury Building and the High Court. The latter, being set apart from Parliament House but facing it is symbolic of the judicial role of the High Court as a physical representation of the separation of powers (Criterion A.4, Australian Historic Themes: 7.2 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy).

The central national area has strong links with the planning and development of Canberra as the Australian Capital. The relocation of Parliament to Canberra and the central national area in 1927 was the focus of an intense period of development of the new city and gave purpose to Canberra as the Nation's Capital. Over time this association has been reinforced by the construction of major government buildings in the area, such as the Treasury Building, the Administration Building (now John Gorton Building), the Portal Buildings and latterly the new Parliament House, as well as the construction of major cultural institutions. The area as intended has become the focus of Commonwealth parliamentary and governmental activity as well as, to some extent, national cultural life. (Criterion A.4) (Australian Historic Themes: 4.1 Planning urban settlement, 7.2 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy, 7.3 Federating Australia).

The area has been associated since 1941 with the development of Australian cultural life and national identity through the presence of such institutions as the Australian War Memorial, the

National Gallery of Australia, the National Science and Technology Centre and the National Library of Australia. The national cultural institutions reinforce the national character of the area and are an important symbolic group in Australia's national cultural life. The Australian War Memorial and Anzac Parade memorials and, to a lesser extent, the other memorials have and continue to play a very important role in fostering aspects of national identity, in particular the Australian War Memorial through its role as a National Shrine for all Australians (Criterion A.4, Australian Historic Themes 8.8 Remembering the Fallen).

Social Importance

The area has strong and special associations with the broad Australian community because of its social values as a symbol of Australia and Federal Government. The values have developed over many years since Canberra's creation and the relocation of the Parliament in 1927 gave them a special focus. The special association is reflected in the use of the area as the location for national memorials, the number of tourists who have and continue to visit the area, the media portrayal of Canberra and federal politics and the continuing use of the area as the venue for occasional ceremonies and political protests by sections of the community. Memorial features include sculptures, plaques, commemorative trees, water features and gardens. The collection of sculptures, associated art and design which comprise the Anzac Parade Memorials, give expression to key aspects of the history of Australia's armed forces and Australia's war involvement, and possess high social value (Criterion G.1, Australian Historic Themes 8.8 Remembering the fallen, 8.9 Commemorating significant events and people).

The special association for the community is also the use of the area by people demonstrating against government decisions. The central national area, particularly Parkes Place in front of Old Parliament House, has been used for countless demonstrations (Criterion G.1).

The landscape spaces are important for social activities of visitors and Canberra residents and these include Canberra festivals, water events, national events and parades such as Anzac Day Parade and the Dawn Service, and other commemorative services (Criterion G.1).

Aesthetic Value

The place has high aesthetic significance due to the visual impact of the extensive open sweeping vista along the land axis that can be experienced in two directions, the designed axes set within natural features of forested hills, patterns and textures of architectural massing accentuated by planned open spaces, water planes and tree plantings that are arranged across the area. The vista is significant for its visual drama with its ability to engage viewers in the visual perspective of the sweeping vista to the terminal features. The aesthetic significance is also a result of the large scale qualities of the axes, including the open green spaces, combined with patterns and symmetrical characteristics of the road networks and numerous designed smaller attributes. These include the

rose gardens, the Old Parliament House Gardens, Commonwealth Park, the street tree plantings, the lake-land interface and the Sculpture Garden of the National Gallery, and many intimate spaces rich in texture, colour, fragrance and in some cases, art works and water features (Criterion E1).

Associational Value

The central national area has a special association with its designer, Walter Burley Griffin. Griffin is an important figure in Australia's cultural history for his overall design of Canberra as the Nation's Capital. The special association between the central national area and Griffin results from the area being the centrepiece of the planning geometry for Canberra and perhaps the only part of his Canberra plan to survive relatively intact. The area has a strong association with Marion Mahoney Griffin who prepared the perspective drawings of the Vista. The Vista area has a strong association with numerous architects and planners, in particular John Smith Murdoch, Chief architect of the Commonwealth Government, and Thomas Charles Weston, Superintendent of Parks, Gardens and Afforestation in Canberra, and notable planners of the National Capital Development Commission such as Sir John Overall, Peter Harrison and Paul Reid (Criterion H.1).